THE

Second Volume

OF

Mr. *Stephen Criſp's*

SERMONS.

A

THE acceptance which the First Volume of the Sermons of this Author has obtained from Persons of different Perswasions hath occasioned the Publishing a Second, of which many seem very desirous: I shall say no more of them, let the Works speak for themselves; but will only add, that the Writer is still willing to satisfie any Inquisitive Doubter (none of whom he has hitherto met with) that these as well as the former are the Genuine Declarations of Mr. Stephen Crisp, *without any addition or alteration, he having used the utmost exactness in taking and Transcribing them, and his care and acuracy therein has been acknowledged and confirmed by many Ear-Witnesses, who have heard them from the mouth of the Preacher.*

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Second Volume

OF THE

Sermons

OR

DECLARATIONS

OF

Mr. Stephen Crisp,

Late of *Colchester* in *Essex*, Deceased.

Exactly taken in Characters or Short-hand, as they were Delivered by him at the Publick Meeting-Houses of the People called

QUAKERS.

In *Grace-Church-street*, and *Devonshire-House*, *London*.

And now Faithfully Transcribed and Published.

With some of his Prayers after Sermon.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nath. Crouch* at the *Bell* in the *Poultrey* near *Cheapside*. 1693

Sermon I.

Truths Teſtimony againſt the Power of Sin and Satan.

Preached in Grace-Church-Street, June 13. 1688.

My Friends,

GOD hath made you Witneſſes of the great Work of this Day, the Lord I ſay hath given you Eyes to ſee, and Ears to hear, and Hearts to underſtand the great Work of the Day; he hath called you forth that you may be faithful Witneſſes every one in your meaſure of that which he hath brought to paſs in your ſight, for he hath revealed his Power, the Eternal Power by which the World was made, he hath revealed and manifeſted that power for the raiſing up of Life, for the ſubjecting and bringing under death, and the Power of it; for a great while a Teſti-

mony that hath been born in the Nation hath been unto Death; he that hath the Power of Death, that is, the Devil, he hath had a great many to ſound out his Power, to declare the continuance of his Power, how that Death muſt Reign, and Darkneſs muſt continue, and that the Kingdom of the Man of Sin, will never be brought down.

But now in our Day, Glory to God on high, here is another ſound come forth, the Lord *Jehovah* hath uttered his voice, and who can but Propheſie? The word of Prophecy is given of God, and many are raiſed up to publiſh it, and to ſound forth the Name of the Lord in the Expiration, the Ruine and Deſtruction that is and ſhall be brought upon the Kingdom of Iniquity, upon the Kingdom of the *Man of Sin*, and to Propheſie and declare in the name of the Lord that Righteouſneſs ſhall run down like a ſtream; this is, the Goſpel, the glad tidings that we receive from God, and have miniſtred unto you, that you might believe, and that believing you might come to wait upon the Lord, and behold the accompliſhment of it.

For, my Friends, herein hath conſiſted all the labour, and travel, and exerciſe of the Servants of the Lord; and for this cauſe have

have we ſuffered many things, and gone through many Trials, *becauſe we have* ſtedfaſtly *believed*, and *therefore we have ſpoken* it, that the Lord will certainly by his Almighty Power, lay waſte, deſtroy and bring to an end that Power that the Wicked one the Devil hath had upon the Minds and Spirits of the Sons and Daughters of Men, and that he will ſet up and eſtabliſh in the very ſame *Soul* a Law of Righteouſneſs, and a Law of *Truth*, and will cauſe the Beauty of *Holineſs* to ſhine forth through them, where Iniquity hath Lodged, where the Wicked one hath Ruled.

Now you that have believed our Teſtimony, you have received it, as glad tidings unto you, for you are weary of that old Service, you are oppreſſed under the Power of that ſtrange Prince: there was a kind of Spirit and Power that had Ruled over you, that neither gave you life nor breath, nor had done any good thing; and yet you were ſubject; and many there were who through the grace of God, that came to ſee that State and Condition of Sin and Iniquity was not a happy State, and by a ſecret kindling of the *Sparks* of Gods Love in your Souls e'er you knew him, there was a Cry raiſed to be delivered, if it be poſſible: If there be any De-

liverance, O why may not I be delivered? If there be any Redemption, why may not I be redeemed? If there be a Power that can ſet me free from the Service of this Wicked one, why may not I be ſet free?

Ah Friends! remember the Days and Nights in which theſe Living Cries did run through you, then you was poor indeed; then you was humble and broken, and the Lord beheld you in thoſe days, he ſaw your State and Condition, he ſaw how helpleſs you were, and did not he ariſe to help you? Did not a Power ſpring forth in the Day of your humility, in the day of tenderneſs by which you became able to make War againſt the Luſts of your own Hearts, and did not you overcome and prevail in your War? did not you make progreſs by the Power and by the Grace that firſt raiſed deſires in you? and as you made this progreſs and gained ground, as I may ſay, of your own Corruptions, your Faith came to be ſtrengthned, and you were confirmed in the belief and in the obedience of the *Truth*, and the more you truſted and relied upon him, the more did he magnifie his Power in you, he made known his ability, and his ſtrength in your weakneſs, ſo that you did become Living *Witneſſes*, every one in your meaſure; that there

there was ſuch a Power, and that that Power was able not only to ſave from a little, or from a few, but was able to ſave to the uttermoſt, to ſave out of all that was polluted and defiled, and to cleanſe and purifie the Conſcience from all dead Works, and to enable you to ſerve the Living God.

Now the Lord having thus eſtabliſhed you, and confirmed you by his Power, that you were found in the Faith, and firm in the believing of the Truth. My Friends, all the Labour, and Travel, and Doctrine, and Exerciſes of the Preachers of the Goſpel, to thoſe who were Converted and Confirmed became very acceptable. So we preached, and ſo you believed; here was an Unity in our Faith, here grew up a Fellowſhip, a Communion in the Faith, and the Lord became glorified in the Aſſemblies both of them that preached and of them that heard, becauſe each one had a place in the Body, and each one had a Saviour of the word of Life by which the Body was nouriſhed.

Now my Friends, that which lies particularly upon me to leave with you for my *Teſtimony*; and I pray to God it may be placed in the hearts of all you that have believed; that is, that you may all wait upon the Lord to ſee all that brought to paſs which

you have believed: For I take notice by the Eye that God hath opened in me, by which he hath made me to take care of his Flock, and ſometime put his word in my mouth, that I might ſpeak a word in due ſeaſon. I ſay, by this Eye, I take notice of many that have received this precious Faith, and thereby have believed, thereby have believed the great and high ſtate; their Faith reacheth ſo far, they know that Power is able to bring them into a perfect Dominion over their Luſts, and Paſſions, and Corruptions, and over the Spirit of the World, over Pride, over Anger, over all things that are oppoſite to the Divine Life; their Faith is as ſound as we can Preach it in reſpect of the extent of it, but their Faith hath not reached thus far in its operation upon their hearts; they have not had the power going on, to accompliſh and fulfill that which remains.

Are there not ſome here and there that are ſettled in the belief of the Truth, but are got into an eaſe from the Labour of the truth? but if I be ſound in the Faith, my Underſtanding is opened, I do not only believe this matter, but have inward Evidence and Demonſtration that I am certain, paſt all doubt and queſtion of it, that the Lord reveals the power in them that believe, that puri-

purifies them, and makes them every whit clean; and here I have a Fellowſhip and Communion with them that preach, and them that believe.

But my Friends, all this will not give you Communion with God, though there is Communion with the Church of God with reſpect to Men who are come into one Faith and Doctrine, yet for fellowſhip with God it ſtands in a life beyond all Doctrines, and beyond all words and expreſſions; therefore your buſineſs and mine, and every one that we firſt undertook when our faces were firſt turned to God, that we may be followers of Chriſt in the Regeneration. For many may be firm in point of Doctrine, and yet may not follow Chriſt Jeſus: Many hold the Truth, but do not hold it in Righteouſneſs, but unrighteouſneſs.

Now my Friends, have a care your Religion and your Souls Eternal Welfare are concerned. This Doctrine I leave you in Charge in the name of the Lord God: Flatter not your ſelves never a one of you becauſe of the ſoundneſs of your belief, but look for ſoundneſs of heart, and for a right Spirit to be created in you, a Spirit that can no way endure any thing that the light of Chriſt hath made manifeſt to be evil; if

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it be Truth, you own, then Exerciſe Faith upon it, and whatſoever Sin or Temptation aſſaults you, ſay, I ſhall overcome in the Name of the Lord *Jehovah*; I ſhall bring thee under, be what Luſt Paſſion or Corruption ſoever thou wilt, in the name of the Lord, I ſhall overcome thee and bring thee under.

Travel on in the Faith committed to you, and you will be more than Conquerors; you will not only grow into external Fellowſhip with the people of God in the ſight of Men, but into fellowſhip with the Church of the firſt born, whoſe names are written in Heaven; and your Communion will not be in Words and Doctrine, and Principles of Faith; But your Communion will be with God the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and ſo in all your Meetings together, the joy of the Lord will be your ſtrength, and the joy of his great *Salvation* your Covering, and he will manifeſt his gracious Preſence with you; and that Power which hath kept you to this day from your Childhood, and preſerved you in all your Battels and Conflicts with the World, and ſtrengthned and encouraged you when you ſometimes went ſorrowing and mourning night and day, and fearing leſt you ſhould not overcome your Adverſaries;

Adverſaries; that Power that hath kept you hitherto, will do greater things for you than you have yet been Witneſſes of.

Therefore Dear Friends, this I would leave with you, there is nothing will keep you and me in that little time that remains to us here to ſpend on Earth, but that which will keep us in the exerciſe of Faith towards God, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is *able to ſave us to the uttermoſt*; let us wait to ſee the power of God for *Sanctification* and *Holineſs*, that will reach as far as ſaving us from our Sins.

This hath been the greateſt reproach that ever our Adverſaries have thrown upon us, that there are ſome among us that talk of believing in the power of God, and talk of an ability for overcoming their ſins, and living a Holy life, and living without ſin, while they themſelves live in it: This is the greateſt reproach that ever our Adverſaries have thrown upon us; Whoſoever have been the cauſe of this reproach, God will require it of them, for the Lord is jealous of his Name and Glory, and he will have the Praiſe and Honour that is due to his Great Name for *working in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, ſaith the Apoſtle; though I know nothing by my ſelf, yet

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am I not hereby juſtified. When you come ſo far as that, that you cannot charge your ſelves, then the Lord will not charge you, but take heed that therein you place not your Juſtificatron, hereby you are not juſtified.

Therefore have an eye to *Jeſus the Author and the Finiſher of your Faith.* He begins the work of Faith, and he will carry it on until he be the finiſher of it, and the juſtifier of you; he is the Mediator of the New Covenant that alone juſtifies the Children of God: depend not upon your own Holineſs and Righteouſneſs for juſtification; keep your eye to Jeſus the Author of your Faith, who will alſo be the finiſher of it; keep your hearts with all diligence, and walk humbly with God, watching leſt your Adverſary that you have overcome prevail againſt you. By going from the Power there is no ſafety for the Flock, but only while they keep in the Shepherds Fold; be faithful and keep your ſelves in the love of God, and he will be preſent with you, and keep you to be his Witneſſes to the end of your days, and will raiſe up another Generation to be Witneſſes to his Power when he hath taken you to himſelf.

To

To that Mighty Power of God I commit you for preſerving of you in humility of Mind and Soul, and my Prayer for you ſhall be, that you may go on and make a progreſs in the good ways of the Lord until his Work be finiſhed in you.

His Prayer after Sermon.

HOly and Powerful God of Life, who art the Creator of us all, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, thou haſt made us all for the purpoſe of thy Praiſe and Glory, that we might ſerve thee in the Land of the Living, among the Sons and Daughters of Men, and not only ſo, but thou haſt given us thy Holy Spirit, as thou didſt to thy People of old. O Living God of Life, thou haſt ordained a remnant to give up themſelves to be led by it, thou regardeſt them, and art with them, and they enjoy from time to time thy Holy Preſence which makes glad their Souls, and they have Fellowſhip and Communion with thee, and thy Son, through thy Spirit, by which they are quickned to offer up pure and living Praiſes upon thine Altar. O living God of love and life! thou haſt ſhed abroad thy love upon their hearts, by which they are enabled to pray for their Ene-

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mies that they may come to enjoy Salvation, and the pleasures which are at thy right hand, which are infinitely better than all the Pleasures of this vain World. Holy and powerful Father, have respect to all our Souls, and touch all our Hearts with a sense of thy Divine Love, that we may feel the Cords of thy Love drawing our Souls nearer to thy self, and assuring us that thou hast a gracious purpose to save us; O Powerful God of Life shew forth thy Power, that our Hearts may be touched and quickned thereby to come to fear thee and reverence thy Name, and be acquainted with thy Operation in their own Hearts, that they may be humbled and broken before thee, and bow down and Worship in the sincerity and uprightness of their Hearts; so Holy God of Life, if it be thy pleasure none may depart out of this Assembly without some sense of thy Love, and feeling of the Powerful Drawings of thy Grace, and without being raised up to purity of Heart, and convinced of the evil of every thing that is contrary to thee, and serve thee in Holiness and Righteousness, and pursue it with all their Hearts and Minds, and Soul, and Strength, that thou mayst have mercy on them, and pardon their Iniquity, and love them freely, for so thou hast ordained in thy Son Jesus Christ,

that

that we may receive Remiſſion of Sins, through the Belief of thy Everlaſting Truth; and Holy Powerful God of Life, that all thy People may partake of Holineſs and Sobriety, to the praiſe of thy Name, and that they may all come to obtain a Victory over all thoſe Spiritual Enemies that War againſt their Souls, that thy Holy Work of Redemption and Regeneration may be carried on, to the praiſe of thy Grace, and the exaltation of thy Holy Name, to whom Praiſe belongs, Honour belongs, and Wiſdom belongs, and pure and humble Thanksgivings; and unto thee the Living God of Life we deſire to offer our Praiſes and Adorations, for thou alone art Worthy; who art God over all, bleſſed for ever and ever, Amen.

Sermon II.

Bearing the Cross of Christ the true mark of a Christian.

Preached at Devonshire-House Octob. 12. 1690.

HE that knoweth the Day of the Lord, and the stretching forth of his Arm, is quickned to feel the Power that is in Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church; that so he may be enabled through his Power to bring forth Fruit unto God.

The Eye of the Lord is upon you all, and he expects at the hand of every one that they bring forth Fruit unto God, that according to the aboundings of his Mercy towards you, and of his patience and long suffering concerning you, there might at last be an answer in the Soul of every one, unto the mercy and goodness of God; they that do not know and experience this, that the long suffering

ſuffering and patience of God leadeth unto Repentance, they know no part of Chriſtianity; let them make their profeſſion never ſo high, and proclaim their notions never ſo loud; they that know not the Work of Repentance wrought in their hearts, as yet, need to Learn the firſt Principles of the Chriſtian Religion. You know it hath been the Cuſtom of People to learn their Children Principles, and they that have learned their Principles, they go for Chriſtians whether they repent or no, though they go on in Sin and Iniquity all their days, yet they go under the Reputation of Chriſtians, and it is high time to examine and find out, if you can, a reaſon for this, that a Man ſhould be accounted a Chriſtian upon any other terms now in this age, than the Lord Chriſt did Preach and Publiſh in the days of his fleſh; for he did abſolutely deny that any Man could be his Diſciple, without taking up a daily Croſs, and without ſelf-denial: Now how ſhould a Man at this day be a Chriſtian, or a Diſciple of Chriſt, without taking up a daily Croſs, and without ſelf-denial?

It may be ſome will tell me, that they are Baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, and have been taught and have made a profeſſion of Chriſtian Principles, and aſſociated themſelves

ſelves among thoſe that make a profeſſion of Chriſt, but here is not a word of a daily Croſs in all this, nor of ſelf-denial; ſo that they would have you to underſtand in this that the terms of Chriſtianity are changed, and that Men may be Chriſtians without the terms of Chriſt, or at leaſt reputed ſo.

And this hath been occaſioned by the great Apoſtacy that hath been brought into the Church, by a long night of darkneſs, and by the revealing of Antichriſt: Antichriſt hath been diſcovered and revealed, and hath ſet up in deſpight of Chriſtianity a falſe Chriſtianity, and there came in the terms of a Mans being accepted and reputed a Chriſtian upon Antichriſts terms; and if you will conform to do thus, and ſay ſo, you ſhall be admitted into the Chriſtian Society; now all theſe terms of Antichriſt have been ſuch things as an unregenerate Man could conform to and comply with.

And the opening of this door hath let into the Church abundance of Hypocrites and Evil doers, becauſe they were able in their unregenerate ſtate to conform to thoſe things that were required, for in the publick Society of Chriſtians it was not ſaid you muſt be regenerate and take up a daily Croſs, and deny your ſelves, and walk as becometh Saints

Saints, and ſo behave your ſelves that God may be glorified, and the profeſſion of Chriſtianity honoured by you; theſe were the terms of old, but there are other terms of a later date of being Chriſtians.

Now ſeeing this Apoſtacy hath prevailed and ſpread over whole Nations and Countries, not a few, ſo that whole Kingdoms have become Chriſtians upon theſe later terms, and God is greatly diſhonoured among us, and Chriſt the Holy one moſt horribly prophaned among us. It is not ſo common among Heathens and Infidels; to find People wronging and deceiving one another, and killing and deſtroying one another, and yet it is the practice of many that are called Chriſtians; theſe are the fruits and effects of thoſe later times of Chriſtianity. Now ſeeing it is thus, which no mortal man can deny, I have this Queſtion to ask, and I deſire that you would ſeriouſly weigh it in your Hearts and Souls, both while you are together, and when you are ſeparate one from another, whether it is not high time for all of us to return again to the firſt terms of Chriſtianity, and to reckon no man a Chriſtian, let him profeſs what he will, ſaving ſuch a one as doth know and witneſs that the long-ſuffering and patience

patience and goodneſs of God doth lead him to Repentance, and ſaving ſuch a one as hath ſo much Faith towards God, that for Love to God he will deny himſelf and take up his Croſs, and be a follower of Jeſus in that way and Life he lived in.

It is high time for all of us to return again to the terms of Chriſtianity, that were ſet up by a higher Authority than ever Antichriſt had, and before Antichriſt was revealed; for though it is true that Antichriſt hath obtained power on Earth to eſtabliſh his ſort of Chriſtianity, that is, without the Croſs, and a ſort of Religion whereby they indulge themſelves in whatſoever pleaſeth their Carnal Hearts, and Corrupt Minds, yet Antichriſt hath not all Power, he is not Almighty, I hope, Antichriſt, nor the Beaſt, nor the Dragon, nor the Falſe Prophet, nor the Whore, they have not all Power on Earth, though they have a great deal, and by that Power they have eſtabliſh'd Laws, Decrees, Canons, and innumerable things about Religion, and ſome cry, this is the way you muſt walk in, others cry, the way to Heaven lies here, and here you muſt travel if you will come thither. Some cry, this is the truth, others ſay, it is errour; ſo that the World is divided, Antichriſts Govern-

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ment in the World is divided; and when *the Houſe is divided againſt it ſelf*, there is hopes that it will fall at laſt.

But there is one to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given and committed, and his Chriſtians are not divided among themſelves, but they are of one heart, and of one mind, and he that hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, can cruſh and bruiſe that power that others have. *Herod* had ſome, and *Pilate* had ſome, but ſaith Chriſt, *your Power is limited, this is your hour, and the power of Darkneſs, and thou hadſt not had Power*, ſaith Chriſt to *Pilate*, *were it not given thee from above*; here is power given to the Dragon, to the Falſe Prophet and the Beaſt to ſpeak great things, but this Power of Antichriſt is going away, but Chriſt Jeſus was ſent into the World in his day to bring people back again to God, and to the Primitive Religion and Obedience, and to the firſt terms of Society and Communion, and to a fellowſhip in Chriſt Jeſus through the Holy Ghoſt.

Now if we had ſet up a way of Religion as other Folks have done, which is contained in ſome Canons, Articles, Doctrines, and ſuch and ſuch Obſervations and Commandments of Men; and if Men will confeſs theſe Articles,

Articles, and obſerve theſe Canons, they ſhall be of our Society; then we had done like the reſt of the fallen Chriſtians, but we have declared from the beginning, that profeſſing our Doctrine and the Principles of Religion doth not give any Man Fellowſhip and Communion with us, but our Communion is in the Self-denying Life, and a daily Croſs in oppoſition to ſenſual Luſt, Vanity, Pride, and bitterneſs of Spirit, Corruption, Enmity and Wrath; this hath brought us to a Holy Fellowſhip and Communion in the Holy Ghoſt, and to live in Unity from one Head which is Chriſt Jeſus; ſo that there is not this Mans Church, and the other Mans Church among the People of God.

Do you read in the Primitive times that *Paul* had his Church, and *Peter* his Church, and *James* his Church, and *Jude* his Church? Indeed they had their Meetings as we have now, in many Cities and Countries among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; but theſe Holy Apoſtles that were the firſt Publiſhers of the Everlaſting Goſpel, after their Great Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus, they never did appropriate any Church to themſelves, that was not their buſineſs, but our Work and Buſineſs, ſaith the Apoſtle, is to gather you to Chriſt, and *preſent you as a Chaſt Virgin*

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to Chriſt, our work is to *turn you from Darkneſs to Light*, that you may walk in it, and be the Children of it; our work is to *build you up as a Spiritual Houſe to be preſented to Chriſt the* Mediatour.

This is Primitive Chriſtianity that hath its Foundation in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, ſincerity and truth, not in Words, and Terms, and Articles, and Canons, and Decrees, and other Obſervances; this is not the Foundation of true Chriſtianity, nor will be again, when the Devils Kingdom is deſtroyed, which is a ſhaking, for he in whom we believe, hath power from his Father to break the Devils head, Antichriſt and the Dragons head. Chriſt Jeſus is ſignified by divers Names, *The ſecond Adam, Lord from Heaven, the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, but he is the ſame Chriſt; ſo Antichriſt is expreſſed by ſeveral Terms and Names, but he is the ſame Power of Darkneſs, he hath made the Nations drunk, and to ſtagger and deſtroy and devour one another.

This hath been done in the fallen ſtate of Chriſtians, and the deſign which the Lord Chriſt hath in ſending his Miniſters and Workmen to labour among you, is to reſtore Men to the firſt Chriſtianity, and to

bring Men to God, that Religion is not made up of Doctrines, Articles, Canons and Decrees of Men, but it hath the word of God for its Foundation: *he that hath an ear to hear let him hear*: there is some Spirit, and Power, and visible work in a true Christian, which the false Christian never had. The false Christians have taken the Name and the Profession of Christ, and their Fruits have been dishonourable to him: they might as well make profession of Antichrist and Satan, they have a form of Godliness, they have some of the Word, but they deny the Power. What is their Religion and outward Profession, when they want the internal Life, and the motions of the Holy Spirit; if they bring forth the Cursed Fruits of the flesh, enmity, wrath, Lust, and Corruption, which belongs to the fallen Nature and the unregenerate state?

The Apostle takes notice of this deceit and hypocrisie in Religion, which was growing up before he died, *Men having a form of Godliness, and denying the Power thereof, from such turn away.* If there be any Brethren *that walk disorderly, have no Company or Fellowship with them*, if you would have the holy Name of Jesus free from scandal.

This

This hath been the deſign of all the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, to keep their Holy Profeſſion of the Name of Chriſt free from reproach; that the holineſs of Gods ways might be ſeen in the holy Lives of the Profeſſors of them. Till men come to know this, and take up their Daily Croſs, and exerciſe Self-Denyal, their Chriſtianity is good for nothing; I would not have you truſt in it; neither in Articles, Tenents, or Obſervations; but ſee how with your Lives you anſwer your Profeſſion: Chriſt was *Holy, Harmleſs, Undefiled, Separate from Sinners.* And why ſhould not Chriſtians be ſo too? How can Chriſtians be followers of Chriſt, and not ſeparate from Sinners? Chriſt was ſo. He went one way, and Sinners went another; they followed their Sins and Luſts, but he followed the Work his Heavenly Father ſent him about. If thou art a follower of Chriſt thou art worthy of the Name of a Chriſtian. Do Drunkards and Swearers follow Chriſt? Do the Wanton and Proud follow him; Do the Unclean and Hypocrites follow Chriſt? You know they do not, why do you call them Chriſtians? This is a reproach and ſhame to the Holy Name of Jeſus, and to true Chriſtianity, that any of theſe Folks ſhould be called Chriſtians, but

such as are followers of Christ, who are *Holy, Harmless, and Undefiled, and Separate from Sinners.*

This is such a strange kind of Doctrine, yet if it had been Preached in the Primitive Times, there was People that would have received it as Apostolical Doctrine, that a man should Crucifie the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts: For, saith the Apostle, *Mortifie your Members which are on Earth; If you through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the Body ye shall Live, but if ye Live after the Flesh ye shall die. And to be Carnally minded is Death, but to be Spiritually minded is Life and Peace*: This was sound Doctrine then.

Now come and tell a man he shall certainly Perish and come to Damnation for all his Profession, if he doth not mortifie the deeds of the Flesh; If he lives in Sin and dies in it he is like to perish: How many have been haled to Gaols and Dungeons, only for Preaching this Doctrine, and when we were first sent to Preach we durst not do otherwise? And God did not send us to Preach till he had washed us, and sanctified us, and fitted us for the work of the Ministry. Now when we saw in the Holy Scriptures, that God did work upon others by his Spirit,

rit, before he ſent them to Preach the Goſpel; was not here ſufficient Authority given to Preach the downfal of Sin, and deſtruction of it? One would think that ſuch a one, thus called and ſent of God, had as good Authority to Preach the Everlaſting Goſpel, as the Laws enacted by all the Princes of the World could give him; a man ſure that had ſuch Authority for Preaching the Goſpel, would not need to wait for Orders and Approbation; he would not ſtay for an Induction. The Apoſtle *Paul* took it for a Commiſſion that was creditable when he tells you of his miſſion, *It was not by Man, but by the will of God* that he was called to Preach the Goſpel. If we ſhould ſay we were made Preachers, if you ask by whom, never a man in the World can tell you; but we were made Preachers many years ago: Not by Man, or by the Authority of Man; but by the will of God. What was your Commiſſion? to turn men from darkneſs (that darkneſs we had formerly lived in) *To turn them from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* The Apoſtle ſums up his Commiſſion in a few words; the Lord told me *I muſt turn men from darkneſs to light.* This is our Commiſſion that we

have received from God in this Age, to turn men from darkneſs.

But ſome will ſay, that we have not Humane Learning & Qualifications for the work of the Miniſtry: To this I anſwer, If I heard a man Swear or tell a Lie, I could tell him that this was not of God, I had Learning enough to know, and tell men, and ſay that Whoring, Drunkenneſs, and Swearing, and Lying were works of the Fleſh, and fruits of the Devils Power; I would have you turn from theſe works to the Power of God. What is that Power of God? I will tell you, it is a manifeſtation of Grace in your Hearts, that will draw you away from the Love of all theſe things; the Grace of God, is the Power of God to Salvation to them that believe: *To as many as received Chriſt, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God; to ſuch as believe in his Name.* Such Chriſtians will ſhew forth the Power and Life of Religion in their Converſations; So that here is a ſufficient Authority, no want of Authority.

I have been ſometime examined by what Authority do you Preach? By the higheſt Authority in Heaven and Earth, by the Authority of God that came by Chriſt, the Redeemer. What do you Preach? Truth in the

the inward parts, Grace and Truth, and againſt all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit.

As long as Antichriſt hath a Rule, you muſt not Preach down Sin without Authority; you muſt have power, you muſt be Ordained, and have an Induction before you undertake to preach the Goſpel, and preach down Sin and Wickedneſs: the Devil hath got ſuch Power and Rule, that ſome tell us, that no Man can live without Sin; if it pleaſe God here, and there to raiſe a Man and bring him to a Holy and Righteous Life; this Man wants a Patent, a Commiſſion, an Induction, an Ordination to Preach and Cry down Sin in other Folks; what Commiſſion had the Pſalmiſt when he ſaid, *Come all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my Soul.*

Is it not high time for People that have Evidences of the Love of God ſhed abroad upon their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, to bear their Teſtimony againſt ſin and wickedneſs? Is it not high time for every bodies mouth to be opened, that God hath been pleaſed to open, to teſtifie againſt ſuch a horrible miſt of darkneſs that is come over Men: to teſtifie againſt Hypocriſie, Uncleanneſs, and Unrighteouſneſs?

It was the great deſign of the Primitive Preachers of the Goſpel, to cry down that which ſome Miniſters cry up, ſo that Chriſtianity is not like what it was, for then they told them that there was no Happineſs but by breaking off *from Sin by Repentance.* No poſſibility of Salvation without confeſſing and forſaking Sin, and truſting in the Mercy of God through Chriſt for the Pardon of it. Tell them of the mercy of God, and the blood of Chriſt, they will tell you that they cannot be cleanſed from all Sin, they cannot live without Sin. How comes it to paſs that there are Miniſters that Preach an impoſſibility of Living without Sin, when we are aſſured in the Holy Scriptures, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee the Lord*? and that *there ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of God any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a Lie? Rev.* 21. 27. How comes this; that Miniſters preach an impoſſibility of living without Sin? Will any of you, ſaith he, be ſo preſumptuous as to ſay a man may live without ſin? I will prove it from good Authority, both from Scripture and Fathers that no Man in the World can do it.

If

If any ſet themſelves to it in their own ſtrength, the Devil will make a fool of them; ſome indeed have gone about it in their own Power and Will, and have Cloyſtered themſelves up in Monaſteries, and ſhut themſelves up between two Walls, that they might be ſeparated from all Society, and live without Sin, they would do it in their own power, and the Devil is ſtronger than they.

Let me tell you, Men of the greateſt Wiſdom, Courage and Strength, of the moſt excellent natural parts that any Man can have, are not able to grapple with their Enemy the Devil by their own power; there are Seeds of all Sin, and Luſt and Concupiſence ſown in their hearts; ſo far this is right and ſound Doctrine, that no man can do any thing in his own power and ſtrength; but here is the miſtake; a Man hath been a long time wreſtling with his Sins and Luſts, to get the Victory over them, but by woful experience he finds his weakneſs and inſufficiency, he is ſunk in his harneſs, and ſo hath given over the Battle, ſaying, I ſhall never overcome the Devil and his Temptations, my Sins and Luſts are too hard for me, I deſpair of ever overcoming them in my own ſtrength, by all that I can do;

that is true enough, but thou muſt needs periſh becauſe thou canſt never overcome thy Corruptions: if ever I be ſaved it muſt be the free Grace of God that muſt ſave me. How canſt thou come to lay hold on the free grace of God? I am told I muſt lay hold on Chriſt by Faith, who is the Mediatour between God and Man, and he is my only Redeemer, there is no Salvation in any other; this is very well, now thou art a Believer, what doſt thou expect, what doſt thou hope that Chriſt will give thee? He will not give me power over my Corruptions ſo as to live without Sin, that is more than I hope for, but I expect that Chriſt will reveal his power in me, and give me ſo much ſtrength and power againſt my Luſts and Corruptions, that they may not have Dominion over me; now if you tell me that you hope for ſtrength and power from Chriſt againſt Sin, Satan, and Corruption, do you now tell me that it is ſtill impoſſible? It was impoſſible before indeed to live without Sin when thou didſt truſt in thine own ſtrength, but now when thou comeſt to have grace and aſſiſtance from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the *Son of God and Saviour of the World*, that giveth thee ability to withſtand Temptation, and overcome thy Corruptions,

ruptions, and the Luſts of thy own heart What, is it impoſſible ſtill to live without Sin? then thou mayſt ſay the Devils Slave I am and muſt be, for there is no other Power in Heaven or Earth for thee to lay hold of, if thine own power, nor Chriſts power neither can do; then thou doſt ſay that the Devil is Almighty. Thus they tell us, when Chriſt hath revealed his power it is impoſſible ſtill.

If I ſhould call this Antichriſtian Doctrine, I could make it out. Bleſſed be God, I do believe that Chriſt is able to preſerve me from the Devils Temptations, and all his inſtruments, if I believe, though I could not do it in mine own Power, yet by Chriſts power I may be preſerved an hour without Sin: If ſo, then a day, and if one day, then a thouſand days if I live ſo long; Chriſt hath promiſed that he will *bruiſe Satan and tread him under feet*, and deſtroy his works, and judge you whether Sin be not the Devils work, ſhall I deſpond, or deſpair to have the Devils work deſtroyed in me?

Here is ground for you all to believe, he that hath Faith may lay hold of this Power which is offered of God, therefore lay hold of it, elſe your Religion will be good for nothing.

nothing. This is the enjoyment of a true Believer, that he receives power from Christ to deny himself, therefore all their pretended Christianity and Profession at the day of Judgment will melt away like Snow. These Canons, Articles, Forms and Liturgies, these will melt away when the day of the Lord comes to burn upon them; none but they that feel the redeeming vertue of the blood of Christ, that have their Souls filled with the Love of God, and whatsoever they love in the World, they that will part with it for Christs sake, shall be accepted.

I am not for setting up this and the other Sect or Opinion; if it be among those of my own profession, if they profes holiness, and bring forth unrighteousness it is all one; I shall not value their Profession. There are many in this City and Nation that have sheltred themselves under the profession of Truth, and talk of perfection, and have brought their Lusts and imperfections with them: here Antichrist is trying another Game to bring them under a profession that will serve his turn; the Devil will allow men Profession if they will but live according to their own Hearts Lusts, so that they may save his head from the blow that Gods

Power

power will bring upon it, ſo they may diſhonour the Holy Name and Religion they make profeſſion of; thus ſaith the Apoſtle, *I have told you often, and now tell you weeping*, they were Chriſtians ſo called to whom he ſpake, but *they are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt*, not to the Profeſſion of Chriſt; he did not ſay they were ſtrangers to the Croſs of Chriſt, but Enemies to it; they let it fall, they kept the Name Word and Doctrines up, but they let the Croſs fall, how much were theſe Chriſtians worth, ſure but very little?

Nay, Antichriſt hath been ſo ſilly, that becauſe the words are ſo put upon the Croſs, No being Diſciples of Chriſt without the Croſs; the words of Scripture are ſo put upon it. Thinks Antichriſt I ſhall never perſwade the People to be at eaſe, unleſs I give them a Croſs; therefore he ſets them a making Croſſes. They muſt be Baptized with the Croſs; they ſay we deny not the Croſs of Chriſt, we hang it about our necks, we ſet it up in all our Meetings and Academies, and many Princes and Wiſe Men, and Learned Men have been ſo bewitched and drunk with deluſions, that they have called this the Chriſt which they have made with

with their own hands; they have made Chriſts and prayed to them, and all their Religion hath been putting together Croſſes, Crucifixes, Forms aud Liturgies which they have made with their own hands.

Here is Chriſtianity in an empty profeſſion, but where is the Soul of it? I would enquire for the life of it, I would ſee Chriſtianity living in love to God above all, and loving our Neighbours as our ſelves; When this Chriſtianity comes, there will be no killing one another, nor perſecuting one another, nor fulfilling the Luſts of the Fleſh, nor pleading for it neither.

Bleſſed be God, that our eyes have ſeen the Witneſſes raiſed, and life from Heaven come into them; and now Religion begins to have a Life and a Soul, and ſhews it ſelf in a little remnant; there is a people raiſed by God that feel life in their Worſhip, in their Families, in their Converſations, and in their behaviour towards Relations, they do what they do as to God; many Lads and Laſſes, Men-Servants, and Women Servants, they do their Work and Service not barely to pleaſe their Maſter and Miſtriſs, but to pleaſe God: *the life they live is by the Faith of the Son of God*; they live as becomes the Members of his Body; Huſ-

bands

bands love their Wives not ſimply becauſe they are their Wives as the Men of the World do, but they do it upon the account of inward Religion, and of the Divine Fellowſhip and Communion they have in Chriſt Jeſus. Husbands ſhould love their Wives as Chriſt loved his Church and laid down his Life for it; ſo a Man ſhould love his Wife, and be tender over her, and Miniſter to her.

The Life of Chriſtianity hath taught us to behave our ſelves ſo as God may have Glory, and Chriſtianity be reſtored to its antient Luſtre and Beauty that it had in former days.

But ſome will ſay, do as well as you can, Men will never love you; if you have the Soul of Chriſtianity you ſhall be reviled and ſcandalized: Men will make works againſt you, and ſtrow Papers againſt you, and ſet the Magiſtrates againſt you; live as well as you can they will follow you, and diſturb you.

That is more than you know; if a Man once come to feel the life of Chriſtianity working in him, and the power of it keeping him from doing evil and wiſhing evil to his Enemies, and diſpoſing his mind to a frame of praying for them, inclining him to

pity

pity them; if a Man come to this ſtate, he is at peace in himſelf, and enjoys tranquility of mind; he looks up to the Mediatour Chriſt Jeſus, and feels an anſwer of peace in his own Soul, and is come to reſt in himſelf.

Now concerning Perſecution, Hatred and Enmity between the Womans Seed and the Serpentine Seed, and how long it will laſt; God whom we ſerve did ſay to the Devil in Paradice, *I will put enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed, it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.* So that it is not to be expected that the Seed of the Serpent, that thoſe that are born of that ſeed can love thoſe that are born of the Womans Seed; it is poſſible that thoſe that are born of the Seed of the Serpent ſhould be tranſlated and brought out of that corrupt ſtate, but it is impoſſible that thoſe that are *born of the Fleſh, ſhould love thoſe that are born of the Spirit*, while they continue in their unregenerate State, but will perſecute them: it is like a natural inſtinct as for water to run downward, and fire to fly upward; were not all Men and Women born Children of wrath, and naturally Enemies in their minds to Chriſt Jeſus? And did he die and ſuffer for them all? ſo that the very nature of the thing

thing is the very reaſon why Chriſt died to Redeem thoſe that were his Enemies to be his Friends.

Suppoſe I or any other to be a Member of Chriſt, and Men do perſecute me and revile me, and hate me, ſhould I not love them, and do good unto them; when I ſee one infinitely better than either you or I, do it for us? *when we were Enemies, Chriſt hath ſent his Spirit into our Hearts* that we might become Friends of him, and of him that ſent him; this is the effect of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and of his innocence, that Enemies may become Friends; thus have many been brought to a Friendſhip of Truth that were Enemies of it; if we could not ſuffer for the Teſtimony we have received of God, what were it worth? but ſeeing God hath not only given us to believe, but to ſuffer for his Name, many have been turned by this means from darkneſs to light, and many more will; the light breaks forth apace, notwithſtanding there hath been ſo much ado to ſtop it.

It hath been the deſign of many Learned Men of this Nation, how ſhall we ſtop theſe mens mouths that preach the Doctrine of Truth in the inward parts, the Light within, and Chriſt within them? I will not repeat the

the many Laws that have been made againſt them that will not Preach Lies, but the power of Chriſt and his truth, now what will you do? You cannot lay hands on them as you uſed to do; no, but we will reproach them with the tongue, we will render them odious to the Government, as perſons that will over-turn Church and State, and that preach falſe Doctrine; and when all is done, and they have ſaid their worſt, People will ſtill believe that Sin and Wickedneſs is hateful to God, that God takes no delight in Sin, and that the Devil will lead us to Sin; he that keeps moſt from Sin, keeps moſt out of the Devils Clutches, and he that lives moſt Holy, is moſt like to God.

Theſe things we will Preach, and we will go on in this Teſtimony, that the beſt way that men can take is to break off their Sins by Repentance, and turn to God their Maker with their whole hearts, and that they will look to their ways, and ſearch and try and examine their hearts, and if they ſee evil to keep out of it; this is ſuch a thing as there is no withſtanding of it, it will go through this Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth.

What if a Company of People ſhould combine together, and ſay, we will not have

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the Sun to ſhine upon the City of *London*, what courſe muſt we take? when the Sun is down we will build a Bank or high Wall to intercept its Light; but notwithſtanding all their endeavours, when the Sun riſeth it will get over all their high Banks and Walls; ſo all the Deſigns and all the Contrivances againſt the Light of the Goſpel, and againſt Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and againſt the Spirit of Chriſt, the Light will aſcend and get over the heads of them all; and it will confound them, and break through all oppoſition.

I Exhort you all (my Friends) that laying aſide all Doctrines and Tenents, and Controverſies among Chriſtians, to come to this ſimple Theſis and Poſition; it is no matter what I profeſs of Religion if my Life be not anſwerable to it, if there be not a love to God, and my Neighbour, and to mine own Soul; there is no Life nor Power in my profeſſion of Religion: I will reſt ſatisfied in the meaſure of Knowledge that God hath given me; I muſt not do to my Neighbour what I would not have my Neighbour do to me; I muſt be upright and ſincere towards God; God will not accept of any Worſhip from me, when I am unclean in Body and in Mind too; we muſt ſee that we be Puri-

fied,

fied, for God will not accept of an Offering from an unclean heart; *you cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean,* ſaith our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great Preacher of Truth and Righteouſneſs; I muſt *firſt make the Tree good before the Fruit will be ſo*; you, and I are theſe Trees, 'till we have ſomething good in our ſelves, we cannot bring forth good Fruit.

Therefore you muſt have reſpect to the Principle of Sanctification in your own hearts, and turn you to what you may feel an experience of in your ſelves, ſome Principle of Grace and Light in your hearts, that can diſtinguiſh between good thoughts and evil thoughts. Is this good for me to do? I will go on in it with faith and courage, but if it be evil, I will not touch with it, though there be profit and pleaſure to allure and draw me to it; I will not touch with it though I might gain the World by it.

Here is Chriſtianity with Life and Soul in it; we have been ſcandalized as if we Preached up Errour for Juſtification: We ſay there is no Juſtification without Sanctification; ſo you that know the Power, live it, and you that deſire to know, turn your minds to the Light and Grace of God, and

you

you will feel the Power that will oppoſe Sin in its Motion, and it will never trouble you in its Action and Workings. If I would not do ill to my Neighbour, and I judge ſuch a Motion when it is ſuggeſted; it will never trouble my Conſcience, becauſe when the Devil moved me to it I rejected it; I would not follow him. It is no Sin to be tempted, for our Saviour that was perfectly Holy and free from all Sin was yet tempted; he had motions in his mind, but he withſtood them; and reſiſted the Devil in all his Temptations: Chriſt was tempted that he might be able to ſuccour us when we are tempted; and he will do it for all thoſe that wait for him.

Therefore, Friends, truſt in the Name of the Lord, and you ſhall feel the ſtirrings of that Power, that *Hath called you out of darkneſs into the Marvellous light* of the Sun of Righteouſneſs wherein you live, and which will ſhine to his Immortal Glory and Praiſe, and the Everlaſting comfort of your Immoral Souls.

Sermon

Sermon III.

The Spirit of Christ the only True Guide.

Preached at Grace-Church-Street, *October* 29. 1690.

YOU that are met together in the name of the Lord, and have your expectation from God, and are really waiting to receive a blessing from his Bountiful hand; you are they to whom the Lord will communicate the good things of his kingdom, and instruct you in the Divine knowledge which the wisdom of this World cannot find out; you shall have your portion in the blessings prepared for you, and laid up in Christ for you; to be handed forth to you from Day to Day for your support: And hereby you have been preserved & kept alive unto this Day: You have received your Nourishment, &

Divine

Divine and Spiritual Refreſhment always in the preſence of God; when you have been out of his Preſence you have met with troubles, and darkneſs hath Gendered upon your Minds, and Vailed and Clouded your Underſtandings, that you have been ſometimes in danger to loſe your way, until you have returned again unto the *Great Shepherd and Overſeer of your Souls, by whom you have had Acceſs unto God.* You that have had theſe experiences, O! Let your Hearts and Souls be engaged to continue together in one Heart and one Mind, ſerving the Lord and waiting upon him for ſomething that may do you good, that may ſtrengthen you and confirm you in the preſent Truth.

For there are a great many that are convinced, that do yet want eſtabliſhment; there are a great many that know the Truth, yet cannot be brought to abide in it; but are ſometimes drawn out of it, and then they meet with trouble in their minds, and *Diſtreſs and Anguiſh lays hold upon them*; and they do not enjoy that Tranquility and Peace, and that Inward Joy which they believe others do enjoy at the ſame time; and which they might have enjoyed if they had abode ſtedfaſt in the Truth. Now what is

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it that will eſtabliſh ſuch a one, but their waiting upon God, to receive Power from him to reſiſt the Temptations, and the manifold Wiles and Snares of their Souls Enemy? whereby they are daily in danger to be drawn away from God; drawn out of the way.

You know Friends, how the Lord brought us into this Exerciſe of waiting upon him, by making us ſenſible that there was none could help us but him. Teachers we have always had, and Men that have ſpoken of God, ſpoken of his Power, and ſpoken of his Wiſdom; but how to dwell in that Power, and ſtand eſtabliſhed in it, as at all times to reſiſt the Power of the wicked one; this is that which no man can help us to, and upon this account it was that the Lords People were fain to cleave cloſe to him, and by Faith to have their dependance upon him; and cry in their Souls, Lord, unleſs thou eſtabliſh me, I ſhall never be eſtabliſhed.

The confirming power that ſtayes and ſettles their minds upon the Lord, it comes from him, it is handed to us through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom we have believed in; they that kept their Faith in him have had longings and breathings of Soul, that they might receive ſome Divine bleſſing by him,

him,& through him. So that they that meet together in this mind, they feel a ſettlement in the Truth as it is manifeſted and revealed in them, and goes down into the deep where Unity is known,where they are of one mind, and the Soul is made capable of putting forth ſtrong Cries to God, and Living Breathings & Prayers to God, that he will teach them how they ſhall profit, how they ſhall grow, how they ſhall ſerve him, and honour him in their Day; that he will reveal his Power in them, to expel any Darkneſs or Vail that hath been gathered upon their minds, that doth hinder them from beholding ſo much glory and excellency in the Truth, and in the Ways of God as at ſometime they have beheld. And ſo theſe are Travellers that are Travelling with the Lord in Faith to receive a bleſſing at his hands. Their minds are not left to this, or that, or the other man; or to meer words or viſible things,but they feel the word of Truth anſwering the Truth in themſelves; and they receive comfort and benefit becauſe they find a bleſſing to ariſe in them. Theſe words reach my Soul, theſe adminiſter help to me, and I am comforted in them, becauſe I find thoſe works working in me, or wrought in me.

For Alas! my Friends, you know many of you, ſome hear the word, and the Declarations in the Word are but ſounds unto them, that have no experience of the work that is ſignified by the word; ſo many ſuch people do hear the lovely ſound, and they are affected many times to hear talk of the work of Regeneration, and of the enjoyments of Gods people, and how they are born up in all their Tryals by an inward and divine Power, and how they are always kept alive to God, and preſerved in his living preſence; but this doth not bear them up in a time of Tryal, but if a Tryal or an Affliction comes they ſink under it, and they are filled with anguiſh and perplexity, ſo that the word barely heard ſpoken, and heard, and not rooted in the mind, doth not miniſter to the work; the words ſpoken do not carry that kind of operation upon them as to witneſs an inward work wrought upon them.

But where there is an effectual work and operation in the Soul, it continues in its labour and travel from Death to Life. And as thoſe Heavenly things, thoſe Divine operations of Gods Power are ſpoken of, there is an *Amen* in your Souls, ſaying as far as you have travelled; thus hath God dealt with me,

me, he hath indeed by his power carried ſome beyond my State and Condition, and my Faith is hereby ſtrengthned, and my Hope is confirmed: he that hath begun a good work ſo graciouſly in my Soul, will carry on his own work, and bring me to higher attainments and further experiences that ſome of his Servants bear witneſs of.

So that now being exerciſed, the work goes on, and *the pleaſure of the Lord proſpereth* in Chriſtians, that when they meet together in the name of the Lord, they know for themſelves that the Lord is preſent with them, they know what the word of the Lord is unto them; if they hear the word preached to another State and Condition then what is their State and Condition, yet they abide in and keep that which makes manifeſt to them their own State: and this ſuffers not the Soul to be carried away with the word, and ſight and viſion of a higher ſtate than their Faith can witneſs to; and they keep low, and humble, and tender, and have a care of their own Souls; as the Apoſtle when he was come to glorious and high attainments in the work of the Lord, yet he would not *glory of any thing*, but what the grace of God wrought in him: We do not boaſt of things that are not wrought it

It is possible for the Creature to gather in, and comprehend the form of things, that they have not the work of in them; and a great many have done so to their great damage, and some (it is to be feared) to their utter ruine. They have comprehended high things, and the notions of great attainments, they have heard them declared and spoken of thus, and so, and some have in their speculations declared to others their Conceptions about those things, yet those things were never wrought in them: they could Preach of humiliation when the root of Pride was not removed: they could Preach of Regeneration and the *Old Man not put off*, and the *New Man Created in Righteousnes* not *put on.* All this kind of Preaching hath been in the World, and is still too much in World, but it hath not produced and brought forth any profit and advantage to the Soul, either to Preacher or Hearer; for it hath not been accompanied with a Divine and Heavenly Blessing, but the true Ministry Ordained of God brings forth a work of Holiness and Righteousnes in the Soul.

And therefore every one that God hath thus reached, and hath opened your understandings, and hath made you capable of comprehending and of understanding Divine

Things

Things, take heed leſt by the ſubtilty of Satan and the wiles of your great Enemy, you be at any time lifted up, and exalted in your Minds in the notion of the things that you have not attained; not that you ſhould not ſo underſtand the things of God that God openeth to you, as they are many times opened to the Creature, before the work of them is in the heart of the Creature: and why ſo? Why are they opened to me? It is for thy encouragement that if thou doſt hold on, and be ſtedfaſt in waiting upon the Lord, theſe things God hath in ſtore for thee.

Now the Creature waits, and ſaith, though I have not attained ſuch things as I have ſeen, yet the very ſight of them encourageth me to wait upon the Lord, that I may experience the witneſs of them in my ſelf: there are many that have had ſome taſt of great joy, and apprehenſions of Heavenly things which they have not attained, but they know what they are waiting upon God for; not that they may have a little joy which paſſeth through them, but come to have that joy and tranquility which will accompany them in all their Doings, and their whole Converſation. God hath opened many things to you, and you have ſeen the

way of Righteousneſs which he hath caſt up for you: and many have taken ſtrait ſteps to themſelves, till they have attained to ſay, *Now my Salvation is nearer than when I at firſt believed.* Let ſuch go on and follow that Guide by which they have been directed, and they ſhall at laſt attain to a further State, not only to know that their Salvation is now nearer, than when they at firſt believed, but that they may come through the Divine Spirit of Grace that they followed, and ſo cloſely cleaved to, as their bleſſed Guide in their way, to have an enterance adminiſtred to them abundantly into the Salvation of God, whereby they may ſit down in the Kingdom of God with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and have a Wall about them which is the Salvation of God.

Here is a great encouragement for Sinners, and Upright ones *to follow on to know the Lord*, and then they are ſure they ſhall know him, for they ſhall behold his Glory, and their Souls ſhall be ſatisfied, for nothing elſe will ſatisfie them.

People may have great openings and great diſcoveries of things, and may have delight and joy in the opening of things, as it was with the Diſciples, when Chriſt our Lord Converſed with them in the Fleſh. he opened

ed many things to them, and they had great Joy and Comfort in thoſe things which he opened to them, yet there was ſomething wanting to ſuffice them, *John* 14. 8. *Phillip ſaid unto Chriſt, Lord ſhew us the Father and it ſufficeth us*: there was ſomething further to be diſcovered and revealed, ſo that they could not find their Souls to be ſatisfied and ſufficed, till they had it. Chriſt gave them ſuch an Anſwer as relates to that Adminiſtration that we are now under; *he that hath ſeen the Son, hath ſeen the Father.* Now they had ſeen Chriſt daily, and converſed with him, and had eat and drank with him in that fleſhly and bodily appearance wherein he Converſed with them; but they had not a ſight of the Eternal Son of God in a Spiritual manner as he was the Son of God, and their Saviour, ſo they had not ſeen him. And he that had ſeen Chriſt in a Spiritual manner, he had ſeen the Father alſo.

So it is with us in our day, we have in our Profeſſion the Teachings of this and that Man: we have Converſed with Chriſt, as it were, as to his Fleſhly Appearance: we have read the Hiſtory of his Birth, and of his Life and great Miracles, and of the great love he had to Mankind, by which he laid down his Life for them. We have

been Converſing with Chriſt as to his Fleſhly manifeſtation; but conſider whether there doth not till now remain an empty place in our Souls, ſomething that is not ſufficed, and ſatisfied?

What would you have? Have you not Scripture? Read you not there of the Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt? I would ſtill have ſomething more, for that will not ſuffice me; I would have Pardon of Sin, and my Peace with God, and the Light of his *Countenance liſted up upon me*, and further manifeſtations of Chriſt to my Soul. We can never ſee the Glory of God but in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. This is the diſcovery that Chriſt makes to the Soul that believeth in him; this is that which gives ſatisfaction.

A Chriſtians Work is to be Converſing with him, and exerciſing his mind under the gathering and teaching of him, that can lead him to the Father: none but Chriſt can do that, lead them to the Father, and ſhew them the Father: and he hath in our day revealed himſelf, and made himſelf manifeſt by his Spirit, that Spirit by which we come to know his Holy Teaching, Reproof, and Inſtruction, daily diſcovered in our Souls: the Spirit is our Guide, that Spirit we

we are led by, and are to walk in. Let men go under what form and denomination they will, *They that have not the Spirit of Chriſt*, are none of his until they come to be guided by his Spirit.

People are not led into Sin by the Spirit of Chriſt; they will tell you theſe are the Devils Temptations, and the Frailty of our Nature, and the Corruption of our Hearts by which we are led into Sin: it is not the Spirit of Chriſt. It would be a horrid thing for men to ſay that the Spirit of Chriſt led them into Sin; there are few or none ſo wicked as to ſay ſo. The buſineſs we are to do in the World is to obey the will of God, and where the underſtandings of Men are ſo illuminated that they are ſatisfied in their minds that God hath been pleaſed to give them a manifeſtation of the Spirit to profit withal: All thoſe that have this Spirit of Chriſt are directed by it to do the Will of God, and to deny their own Wills, and the Will of others, that would draw them from their Duty that they owe to God in their Generation.

It is an excellent ſtate and condition for a man to be guided by the Spirit, and to be brought under the Government of Chriſt, who is *The Way, the Truth and the Life.*

So that they that come under his Government, are directed and Pointed out every day to do the will of God. This thou muſt do and God will be pleaſed with thee, and this thou maiſt not do, for if thou do it the Lord will be angry with thee; it is Sin againſt God. So that we have a Heavenly advantage to be taught of God by his Spirit, to have the Divine and Daily teaching of the Spirit of God revealed in us; if we are at a loſs, or make a queſtion, or diſpute about a matter, the *Spirit will lead us into all Truth*, if we give up our ſelves to his Guidance and Teaching.

This hath been our deſire & labour many years, not to draw People to obſerve what we ſay, for who can direct another Man in all things relating to the Service of God? If we were never ſo certain our ſelves, we cannot convey certainty and infallibility upon all occaſions to another, if we ſhou'd ſpeak never ſo much, and be never ſo much converſant with them. Therefore our work is, that all People in all things relating to their Souls, might have recourſe continually to the infallible Teacher and Guide, which God through Jeſus Chriſt hath made known to them. If People be ruled by this, they cannot but live in Unity, and Love one another;

ther: they will not fall into malice, contention and hatred one againſt another. It is impoſſible for Nations to make War, and Deſtroy one another if they would be guided by the unerring Spirit of Chriſt, for how ſhould it contradict it ſelf? For how can any thing that agrees with the Standard of Truth which Chriſt hath ſet up, act in contradiction to it? for nothing is Truth but what concurs with it, therefore it muſt needs agree with it ſelf. If we be directed by the Spirit, we ſhall call that good which is really good, and that evil which is ſo. If there be thouſands directed by the Spirit of Chriſt which leads into all Truth, that which is good to one is ſo to all; and that which is evil to one is ſo to all. We muſt firſt know what is good, and then receive power to do it. If we come to be inſtructed by the unerring Spirit, *To know what is the good and acceptable will of God,* We ſhall receive daily power from him to do the will of God, we ſhall all ſpeak the ſame thing, and be of the ſame mind, and live in Love and Unity. There is no evil wilfully done againſt God where the Spirit of Chriſt, the Goſpel Spirit comes to prevail upon us: it will bring us to a peaceableneſs of Spirit, to live in Love and Unity: And the great work

work we have in the World, will be to do the good and acceptable Will of God, both with reſpect to our ſolemn Worſhip of God, and our Duties towards our Neighbour: then there will be Tranquility, Peace, and Joy, and Comfort to all the Churches of Chriſt that are under his Government. And it is given to the Sons and Daughters of Men every where, when they come under the Yoke of Chriſt, and take up a Daily Croſs, and live in Self Denyal: this will bring Peace and Concord among them.

Many will come to our Meetings, and ſpend a little time to hear what we ſay: We exhort them to give up themſelves to the peaceable Government of the Spirit of Chriſt, that *will finiſh Tranſgreſſion and make an end of Sin*; and bring into the Soul (where Sin reigned) *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*. Where there is a great deal of Pride, Malice and Envy the Spirit of Chriſt will root it up, and all that evil that the Enemy hath Planted in men he will pluck it up and bring in *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, and Plant Love in the ſame Soul, and eſtabliſh and ſettle it: ſuch a one will have more Joy, Pleaſure and Delight under the Government of the Spirit of Chriſt in one day,

day, than any one can have that is governed by the Evil Spirit in a thouſand days.

You ſay the *manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withall,* what profit ſhall we get? How doth it appear, that the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to profit withal? Becauſe there is that Life and Grace ſtirring in the heart that makes it profitable, and Truth doth ſo prevail, that it makes us to do thoſe things that are good and profitable, and to avoid thoſe things that are reproveable. If thou wouldeſt hearken to the Spirit, that is the Reprover, that convinceth of Sin, thou muſt turn away thy mind from that which will lead into thoſe things that are reproveable, otherwiſe thou wilt be under Condemnation in thine own boſome.

When the Spirit of God illuminates Men to ſee Sin, the evil of Sin, he will give them power againſt it; but when they come to receive power againſt it, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the ways of God, what will be the effect of that? If I become Righteous and live a Holy Life, and my Companions be wicked, they will mock me, and reproach me, what profit and benefit ſhall I have by being Righteous? I ſee evidently I ſhall loſe many advantages which I might otherwiſe reap,

and

and reach with mine own hand. I must forsake my Profits and Pleasures, and all the Delights of this World.

The Disciples said to Christ, *we have forsaken all and followed thee*, what shall we have? People before they would forsake all, would see some thing they must have in the room of it. Christ tells them, that he that *hath forsaken all, Father and Mother, Brothers and Sisters, and House and Land for his Names sake, shall have in this Life an hundred fold, and in the World to come Eternal Life*: what is the meaning of that? They shall have in this Life 100 fold; Christ that is Truth it self, that cannot Lie, hath promised that they that forsake all shall receive an hundred fold: now people are ready to grasp at it, they think it must be something that will answer the loss of that they part withall: that thou receivest in this promise must not be of the same sort and kind with those things thou didst part withall; but when thou hast parted with all for Christs sake, and the Gospel, thou shalt receive that which thou shalt acknowledge is an hundred fold better, and will make thee an hundred fold richer and happier, and that it will give thee more an hundred fold than

than all that thou parted with could give thee.

If we part with Sin, we part with that which brings bondage and fear of Death, having parted with that when thy fear and bondage is gone, and thou liveſt then the reſt of thy Life time at liberty: but this is not all, thou liveſt in the enjoyment of the favour of God, thou ſhalt have the ſenſe of his Love, and the Comforts of the Holy Spirit, and you ſhall live in Peace and Righteouſneſs, and *treaſure up to your ſelves Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life*; whereas before you did *treaſure up only wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*; thou ſhalt receive an hundred fold, that which is an hundred fold better. Thoſe that part with the things that are reproveable, and do what Chriſt in his day performed, the good and acceptable will of God, the Enjoyments that he hath in Chriſt, and the Comfort, Peace, and Tranquility he enjoys is an hundred fold better and more delightful than all the pleaſures of Sin, and the pleaſures and delights of Shows, and Sights, and Plays, and Comedies, which vain Men entertain themſelves with in their Carnal State. A

Carnal

Carnal Man cannot understand and discern the things of God, and the pleasures that are to be had in his holy ways; he only looks *at the things that are seen, which are Temporal, and not at the things which are not seen which are Eternal.*

But, my Friends, those things which are unseen, are not so unseen, but that when a man hath an eye opened within him of the same Nature with those things, he can see them: blessed be God that we have an eye opened to see Spiritual things, to see the Heavenly Treasure and enjoy it in these Earthen Vessels.

For all that have an ear to hear, it would be a profitable change to part with all that is evil in the sight of God, and put themselves under the Yoak of Christ, and receive a Principle of Grace which he will Communicate to them, that they may do the good and acceptable will of God, and so may enjoy an hundred fold, and have comfort, peace, and joy, before they go hence and are no more seen.

You to whom God hath so graciously and mercifully appeared, that have an understanding, and a tast and feeling of those things which are Divine and Spiritual, and *which pertain to Life and Godliness* Of all the

the People in the World you are an engaged People to ſerve the Lord: great obligations lie upon you that you ſhould abide and continue in that, which God hath revealed and diſcovered to you; I mean Grace, for you will never grow till you be under the Government of the Grace of God, that Grace that appeared to you before you came to the Knowledge of God and his ways, that hath been with you in your travel from Death to Life, and from Darkneſs to Light. Prize it as a Heavenly Jewel, as that which contains in it all thoſe things that your Souls ſtand in need of. If you have any ſtrength to reſiſt Temptation, it is from the Grace of God that you receive Power to withſtand Temptations; if you have any living openings in your hearts, it comes to you from that Grace that is in Chriſt. When this, and that, and the other Prophecy of the Prophets of old is opened to you, Prophecying and Foretelling that State and Condition which you are travelling towards, how the Lord will ſubdue your Enemies under you, you are encouraged hereby to go on cheerfully in your way to that Reſt which you are travelling to.

There are many of thoſe that believe the Truth who are not come to Eſtabliſhment; and

and they will find the Reason and Cause in themselves. Do but ask and enquire how it comes to pass that such and such are established, and not so subject to fear, and horrour, and perplexity as I am; a little thing will turn me over, and shake and unsettle my mind; this hath been the cause; want of keeping close to the grace of God in your Conversation in the World: when you and your Children and Servants are governed by the grace of God in all you undertake, then the Devil will endeavour to bring you into darkness, and bring discomposure upon your Spirits, for the purpose of Christ Jesus our Saviour, is to settle you, and the purpose of the Destroyer is to discompose and unsettle you, and to marry you to this and the other changing thing; if he can fix your hearts upon this and that Object, then there is instability upon the Soul; take away that thing, and it brings disturbance upon you. Hast thou any Object that thy mind is set upon? Thou wilt be much disturb'd at thy parting with it, but whose fault is that? The truth manifested to thee from the beginning of thy Conversion, did engage thee to separate thy self from all visible sensible things, that God might have thy heart and thy chief Love. If he had been thy God,

nothing

nothing could diſquiet thee, when ſeparated from thee: If ye will have other Gods beſides him, you will loſe your Gods, when they are taken from you, and you will be like *Micah*, and ſay, *ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* (*Judg.* 18.24.) The reaſon of your diſcompoſure, and anguiſh, and ſorrow, was this; when you had ſome other Gods beſides the Lord, and your hearts did cleave to ſome temporary thing, and that when the Trial comes, that thou muſt part with it, thou canſt not bear it.

If you would live a Serene Life, a Life of Tranquility, ſet your minds upon nothing but upon the Lord, let him be the object of your Souls love, live in the light of his Countenance, and you may always rejoyce: Conſider, as for Temporals you hold them of the Lord, God gives you this Husband, that Wife, that Child, that Eſtate, God hath entruſted you with it; but not ſo, but he that hath it muſt part with it, and be bereaved of it when God pleaſeth. Now, if you give up your hearts to God, here will be your eſtabliſhment and ſettlement, and you will have an an *abundant entrance into the Everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* And would we ſeek

to

to know and feel wherein the Communion of the Saints ſtands; doth it not ſtand in partaking together of the Bread of Life, which our Father giveth us from Heaven? The Father ſpreads a Table for us in the ſight of our Enemies, and we are ſatisfied. They that come to partake of this Table of the Lord, find ſtrength and refreſhment, ſo do I, and alſo my Brethren and Siſters that ſit at the ſame Table. We are daily confirmed and ſtrengthned by what we receive from God, and enjoy there; here is our Heavenly Fellowſhip and Society; and where this is the root of Love, Love cannot be wanting in the branches. There muſt be a departing from the Bread of Life, before there can be any jarring and contention among the Members of the ſame body, for we receive Life from the ſame Head *from which all the Body by joynts and bands, having Nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſe with the increaſe of God, and are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the Chief Corner-Stone, in whom all the Building fitly framed together, groweth unto a Holy Temple in the Lord.*

Now

Now that you may be all preſerved in Chriſt, this is the end of our Labour, that ſo every one that hath begun in the Spirit, may go on in the Spirit, and never look for perfection in the Fleſh. That you that have begun in humility, tenderneſs, and brokenneſs of heart, may in that meet together at times and ſeaſons, and have daily the preſence of God among you, and have that Bread of Life, which will nouriſh you to Life Everlaſting, and that you may ſhew forth to the World the Glory, Brightneſs, and Excellency of that Holy Life, which in Chriſt Jeſus is manifeſted to you.

Sermon IV.

Pure and Spiritual Worſhip.

Preached at Devonſhire-Houſe, *Novemb.* 12. 1690.

THE Worſhip of God, of the Great God is Pure; he is a Holy God, *Of Purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity:* and all they who will Worſhip God, whoſe Souls are breathing to have the return of a Teſtimony in his ſight, muſt offer Pure Worſhip, and it muſt come from that which is Pure. For that purpoſe the greatneſs of the Love of God is made manifeſt in Chriſt Jeſus; and there is a diffuſing of his Grace and Vertue in the Hearts of the Sons and Daughters of Men, whereby he hath laid a Foundation for his own Worſhip; becauſe his Worſhip muſt be Pure. Therefore he hath freely given unto us through his Son, the knowledge of that Pure Principle of Life and Grace,

Grace, from whence and out of which all true Worſhip doth Spring, and all true honour to God ariſeth, and real obedience to his Holy Will ſprings forth out of that which is from himſelf.

And therefore all that will be Worſhipers of God aright, muſt firſt know and be ſenſible wherein the ability and capacity ſtands, that may enable them to ſo great and ſo good a work. Some have conceived it to ſtand in their own Will, and according to the working of their own Will they have framed Worſhips, Religions, and Obſervations; thinking thereby to pleaſe God: But you know the Apoſtle in a few ſhort words lays down a poſitive Chriſtian Doctrine, *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.*

Now this doth declare and ſignifie that there muſt be ſomething upon which this Faith muſt work, that muſt be the Object and Foundation of it: Faith as it worketh in the Creature, worketh upon ſomething: It lays hold upon ſomething in which there is a capacity of pleaſing God. Now if *we are all by Nature Children of Wrath*, and that no one of himſelf can pleaſe God, then there muſt be ſomething that is Supernatural that muſt be the Object of that Faith by which men alone can pleaſe God; and this muſt

be

be made manifeſt to the Creature for its help, for to be its director and ſupporter in that work that is too mighty for himſelf, too great a work for a Man or Woman, too deep, too profound for any Mans Abilities, Power, Wiſdom and Acquirements that he can attain to in this World to Worſhip God aright: To Worſhip God, that is, to perform a Pure Worſhip to a Pure God: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Now if we are all obliged to bring a clean Worſhip, a pure Worſhip to a Pure and Holy God who hath Created us and all things; where ſhall we have it? Not out of an unclean Heart, not out of a defiled Mind; there is no bringing of it forth from thence, for that is the ſtate and condition that men are fallen into by Sin; in which their minds and Conſciences are defiled, their Hearts are polluted, and their Affections depraved and ſet upon wrong Objects; and in this ſtate none can ſerve God aright. That which is Pure and Holy muſt be firſt made known, revealed, diſcovered and believed before People can perform a Right Worſhip to God.

And therefore in vain is it to go and drive People to this and that Worſhip, and force People to this and that Service and Con-

Conformity upon the account of the Worſhip of God. This is vain Worſhip, when they have done all it is not acceptable to God; the poor Creature hath no Return from the Lord, for God accepts no Service or Worſhip, but only through his Son. And if ſo be men cannot Pray and Preach in the Spirit of his Son, and cannot preſent their Complaints and Supplications to God, but by the aſſiſtance and help of his bleſſed Spirit, there is no reaſon in Religion why People ſhould expect a return and anſwer from God of the Prayers they make. For it is the General Doctrine of Chriſtendom that Chriſt Jeſus is appointed of God for a Mediatour between God and Man, and all the acceptance we have, or deſire to have muſt be through him: and therefore if we Pray without him, and perform this and the other Duty without him: It is contrary to the Doctrine of Chriſtianity to think that ever we ſhall have acceptance in Gods ſight.

Therefore there is a neceſſity for every Man and Woman that deſires to be Religious, that hath a Religious mind and is willing to Worſhip God, and Serve God aright, there is a neceſſity that they come to the knowledge of Chriſt, who tells us that he is *The way to the Father*: They that go any

other way, go a wrong way; but they that go unto God by Chriſt, they do receive from him power to draw near to God; and through him they receive from God all thoſe bleſſings that their Souls ſtand in need of.

So here would be an end of all Religions the World is full of, of all the ſeveral Worſhips that men have made: they have invented and found out ſeveral ways for People to Worſhip and Serve God: This and the other Ceremony, this and the other obſervation and Method of Preaching and Praying: If all this be without the Aſſiſtance and Divine Help of the Mediatour, thro' whom alone we can juſtly expect acceptance at God's hands, it is all good for nothing. Therefore the firſt Leſſon of a Chriſtian in point of Worſhip, is that he come to the knowledge of Chriſt by whom, and through whom he may expect favour with God.

Now ſay ſome People, we are already come to the knowledge of Chriſt, we have read the Relation in the Goſpel of his Conception, Birth, Life and Death, Reſurrection and Aſſenſion; now whether this Belief doth give a man this kind of Chriſtian knowledge, that doth open a Door and Way for him into the Preſence of God; This is

Queſtion

Queſtion that ought ſeriouſly to be conſidered; for if we err in this Queſtion, we err in all; this is like ſtumbling at the threſhold, and never coming into the houſe. If we miſtake in laying hold of Chriſt, we miſtake in our Worſhip, and in all matters that relate to Life and Salvation.

For if we muſt have another ſort of knowledge of Chriſt, than we can have from the reports of others; if I muſt have Chriſt revealed in me before I can have the hope of Glory; if I muſt have the Spirit of Chriſt in me to help me to put up my requeſts and ſupplications before he can preſent them to the Father, then all literal knowledge and faith cannot ſtand Men in any ſtead, but this is evident by the Teſtimony of all the Writers of the New Teſtament. Chriſt and his Apoſtles did concurrently ſignifie that the hope of a Chriſtian, that the power and ſtrength of a Chriſtian, it all lies in this, in that they had known the revelation of Chriſt, and the powerful operation of the Spirit working in them; this was that which was well pleaſing to God; many Scriptures might be ſpoken of, but you know the Scriptures, and can read them and ſee in them the concurrent Teſtimony of all Holy Men to this day, that the knowledge they had of Chriſt

was a Divine Knowledge, a Spiritual Knowledge, it was a knowing him after the Spirit, it was a Revelation of Chriſt in them that ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed them from Reprobates, even the knowledge of God through Chriſt Jeſus their Lord: why ſhould not we come to this Knowledge as well as they? the Lord is the ſame, and his Power is the ſame, and his *Arm is not ſhortned:* we may ſee as much need of Divine Aſſiſtance, and Divine Love as ever men did; we can perform no duty either of Prayer or Preaching without Divine Aſſiſtance, nor ſo much as a ſigh or a groan that may have acceptance with God, without the help of his Spirit, Rom. 8. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we ſhould Pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* If we go about the Duty of Prayer without Divine aſſiſtance, we ſee what ſad work we make of it; if we Pray not in the Spirit and with underſtanding, how can we receive the thing we pray for? but if we *Pray in the Spirit, and with underſtanding alſo,* then the *Spirit helpeth our infirmities:* the Spirit that came from God brings us the things that we ſtand in need of.

So

So that a Chriſtian hath a foundation for his Worſhip and Chriſtian performance: what is that foundation? Nothing that is corrupt, if it be, it is good for nothing; for nothing that is corrupted and that defiles, can be acceptable and pleaſing to God: we are all polluted and defiled by Nature, how can Carnal Men Worſhip a Spiritual God? Carnal Men that are in Death and Darkneſs cannot Worſhip that God that is Light, and dwells in Light, that is inacceſſible, that is *of purer eyes than to behold Iniquity.* Carnal Men want a Foundation for their Worſhip, and will do till they come to that foundation that God hath laid.

Now, that I may ſpeak intelligibly what the Lord hath laid upon my heart, I would ſay thus: There is an Univerſal benefit and priviledge diſtributed and given freely of God, unto the Sons and Daughters of Men, in their Natural State through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, in that he hath cauſed his Light to ſhine, and his Grace to be extended to every Man; *for the Grace of God* which bringeth Salvation (for it is not by Works) *hath appeared to all Men,* and bringeth Light, by which every Man may ſee how to Worſhip God. God hath enlightned every Man, and this Light comes by Chriſt the Mediatour,

this Mediatour is the way that Men muſt walk in if they will come back again to God, for Men are run out and departed from God; if Men will draw near to God, and take ſome footſteps towards the Kingdom of God, from the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, they muſt mind the way, the way muſt be their Director, they muſt not go which way they liſt.

This is that which was propheſied of Chriſt, ſaith God by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *I will give him for a Leader*, I would fain return to God, and go out of the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, to the Kingdom of God: God hath given Chriſt to lead me, if I knew that way he would lead me in, I would go that way. As ſoon as a man takes hold of Chriſt, his Grace, and Spirit, and Life, he will be ready to ſay, I am corrupt, my ſenſes are corrupt, my mind is depraved, my Conſcience defiled and polluted, but I have found out ſomething that God hath beſtowed upon me, that is eſſentially holy and pure, that did never conſent to my corruption, but is a witneſs for God againſt it: here now a Chriſtian lays hold on Chriſt the Leader, which way will he lead me? If thou layeſt hold on this guide, he will lead thee out of evil, he will teach thee to

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ceaſe to do evil, and ſpeak evil: This Light will lead thee to nothing that will diſhonour God, or defile thy own Soul. But this is not all, we muſt not only ceaſe to do evil, but we muſt be doing ſomething; there muſt be a breaking off from Pride, *Fooliſh Jeſting, Evil Communication,* but this is not all that he will lead me to; let us learn that leſſon, ceaſe to do Evil. This Doctrine was Preached before Chriſtianity was Preached, as it is now Preached, the Prophets of old Preached this Doctrine to the Jews that were under an outward Adminiſtration, *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well,* then I will plead with you, and diſcourſe with you, ſaith the Lord; *Come now let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord, though your ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow, though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wooll.*

This is the firſt Leſſon that a true Chriſtian learns in his turning to God, in his change and tranſlation, *to ceaſe from that which is evil*: here is a Ceſſation of Rebellion, and here is ſome hopes of being reconciled to God; a man hath been a Rebel againſt his Maker, but he hath now received help to reſiſt thoſe Temptations that prevail over him: but there is no worſhiping yet, there

is a forward mind in men to do ſomething that is pleaſing to God, but there are ſome that are not troubled at all for their evil ways and dread not Gods anger, but make a mock at ſin, that draw others to it, and make themſelves merry in it: but there is a ſort ſo far touched with a Divine ſenſe of God's Love to them, that they have alſo a ſenſe of his anger and indignation, becauſe of their Sin; and they would fain be out of his anger, and who can blame them? When a Man feels the anger of God burning like fire in his boſome, who can blame that Man if he deſires peace with God? if he be under a ſenſe of the diſpleaſure and indignation of the Almighty, he muſt not haſt too ſoon out of that Condition he is brought into; for this is Gods purpoſe, and this is the fruit of all his troubles and afflictions, to take away Sin: God had no other end or deſign in the affliction that came upon him, than to take away Sin; when God hath brought a People into a diſtreſſed and dejected State for their Sin, the fruit that God expects is the *taking away of their Sin*, and he will hide Pride from them, and humble them before him; if this be the purpoſe of God that he intends to purge and purifie his People, then ſaith the poor Creature, if God deſign to pu-

ifie me from Sin, then I will pray to God to ſupport me, and bear me up under his indignation: that is the cry of the Soul that he may not be brought too ſoon from under the judgment of God, but that he may be ſupported and hid in the hollow of Gods hand until the time of remiſſion and refreſhing comes, that he may behold the light of Gods Countenance.

Here is encouragement for every one that is acquainted with this Divine Principle of Grace, that will be led by it, and follow it ſo far, as to be led out of evil; then they will be fitted to do ſomething in the work of God; every ſigh and groan that thou haſt, the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God to help thee in, is part of Worſhip; all thy brokenneſs of heart is part of worſhip; hereby thou acknowledgeſt the great God, that he is able to help thee on in thy way, and to pardon thy iniquity, and blot out thy tranſgreſſion, and give thee all thoſe Heavenly bleſſings that thy Soul doth ſtand in need of: then thy Soul will bow down to God in acts of holy Worſhip, and ſay, with an humble confidence and expectation, God will do all thoſe things in me and for me that will promote my Salvation. It is nothing in Religion for People to go from

Praying and Preaching to Sinning, but God muſt have a Holy Sacrifice, and that muſt come out of a pure heart; now when a Man is brought by the help of God, and by the Divine aſſiſtance of the Mediatour Jeſus Chriſt, to break off from his Sin, then he ſtands fair to become a Child of God, and to be a Servant of God, and to do ſomething for God in his generation, and to offer to God Praiſe and Thankſgiving, and to perform all other Duties that God ſhall lead him into.

But ſome will ſay, what, muſt we do any thing? I have deeply weighed that Queſtion, what a poor Man or Woman muſt do, that is come out of bondage? there is a propenſity in People to be doing, they would fain do ſomething, they would be doing, they ſay, what ſhall I do? If I do ſomething that pleaſeth not God, I had better let it alone, and I can do nothing acceptable to God without Divine aſſiſtance: ſuch a one that ſees his own impotency and inability will caſt his care upon God, and will ſay, the Lord is able to lead me and guide me, I am ready to do thy will, O God, make it clear to me that this is thy will, and that this is that which thou requireſt, I am ready to do it, though it be croſs to mine

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own will; he is ready to go on in Gods way, in the way of Chriſtianity; ſuch an one that hath the true knowledge of Chriſt, if he ſpeaks, the Spirit of Chriſt ſpeaks in him, if he prays, it is through the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt, through whom God alone is appeaſed and reconciled, and through whom they may receive a bleſſing from Gods hand: but for Men to run on in their own wills, and to do a thing becauſe they will do it, they had better ſit ſtill; this doing in their own wills hath filled the World with a ſort of Chriſtians that want acceptance with God, which is to be had alone through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the want of the Guidance of Gods Holy Spirit is the miſery and downfall of Chriſtianity in our days.

Therefore it is our Work and buſineſs to build upon that foundation which God hath laid; no Worſhip is pleaſing to God but that which ariſeth from that Spring that is pure and holy; if I cannot find that which will keep me from all Pollution and defilement, if I cannot find that, I muſt ſtay till I can; for to begin a Worſhip and a Religion without that which I know is acceptable to God, it is but loſt labour, & time ſpent in vain.

Therefore, Friends, let every one that deſires to be Religious, turn their mind inward

inward, wait for the gift of God which is eſſentially pure, that never did conſent to evil, that never mixed with the corruption of Nature, but bears witneſs to the Light, that will guide you, and lead you, and conduct you, firſt out of Sin; then it will lead you into that Worſhip and Religion, and the performance of thoſe things that are pleaſing to God. They that are come thus to Worſhip, they do not only know what the Lord requires of them, and when he requires it of them, but they are given up into the hands of God; they Pray, Preach, Exhort, and Live according to the will of God.

It is hard for People in a Carnal ſtate to believe this, but you that are Believers, that are come to know the gift of God in your ſelves, and the neceſſity of being ruled by him; you will believe us, for none elſe will believe us; let us Preach to as many People and Nations as we will, none will receive us as true Miniſters, but thoſe that have the truth in their own hearts; if there be any that deſpiſeth the Grace of God in his own heart, he hates that which chides and reproves him; if there be ſuch a Man, he will hate me becauſe I am a Miniſter and a Witneſs of the Grace of God, and of that truth

truth in the inward parts which is the ground and foundation that a Man hath of acceptance with God. A Wicked Carnal Wretch will ſay, I hate ſuch a one, I hate the Light, that which checks me, and witneſſeth againſt me; thou art ſuch a one as beareſt witneſs againſt me, therefore I hate thee: It is very true, it cannot be otherwiſe: now our deſire and labour is, that Men may come to the love of the truth in themſelves.

You know there are a great many other Miniſters, whoſe Labour is to perſwade People to believe what they ſay; to lay down a Doctrine and prove it by Scripture and Reaſon, and ſet it home upon their Minds by ſuch teſtimony as the Scripture affords, and hereupon they prevail upon the minds and judgments of People to believe what they lay down.

It is eaſie to lay down a Poſition and prove it, and convince People that it muſt be according to Scripture; but when a Perſon is convinced of a Principle of Truth, he is not Regenerate thereby, and come to God; therefore though he cannot deny the Doctrine of Truth in words, yet he can deny it in works, and doth not rightly come to love it. If People would believe what we ſay, and obſerve what Arguments we bring

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for proving a Poſition, they may be convinced of the Doctrine of Truth, and come to a profeſſion of it, and yet be ſtrangers to it, till they come to love it in themſelves; if it were not for this we would leave Preaching, if God had not given a meaſure and manifeſtation of the Spirit to every Man to profit withall: you have it in your ſelves, we are but as Monitors to you to put you in mind of it; you have ſo much buſineſs in the World that you have not had leiſure to take notice of it.

A Man may have a Rich Jewel and be Poor notwithſtanding, till he come to know the value of it.

A Man hath a Rich and Precious Jewel, a Pearl beſtowed upon him that would make him Rich in Faith and Love to God, and qualifie him for the Kingdom of God, and make him an Heir of it, but he knows not nor underſtands the value of it, and eſteems it not, therefore God hath raiſed up Miniſters to put you in mind of it, that you may be happy for ever, and live in Bleſſedneſs to all Eternity; *whoever hath an ear to hear let him hear*, and when they hear what we ſay, let them take the benefit of it to their own Souls. We bring not truth to you, but God hath beſtowed it upon you; you will

will be Rich indeed, if you do as a Man that bought a Field where the Precious Pearl was, and digged till he found it. Come to the foundation upon which you ſhould build all your hopes of happineſs, and depend not upon your own Works or Religious Performances for acceptance with God, for there is no acceptance with God but only through Chriſt, we are only accepted of God through him; thoſe that will become Chriſtians indeed, and worſhip God as he hath ordained and appointed himſelf to be worſhipped; they muſt come to the Principle of Light and Grace in their own hearts, which they have in, and through Chriſt, and then they will find acceptance with God.

Sermon V.

The Divine Life of Christ Jesus.

Preached in Grace-Church-Street, *March* 16. 1691.

THE Bleſſed Life of Chriſt is not of this World, and it ought to be your care in all your Religious Aſſemblies, that you be gathered into the inward feeling ſenſe of this Divine Life; that you may feel your Fellowſhip and Communion in that Life of Chriſt, that is not of this World. And may all of you lay hold upon it, for this is the Nouriſhment and the Heavenly Bread with which *the Children of the Kingdom* are fed and nouriſhed from day to day; there are many that feed upon words, that are not the Children of the Kingdom of God, but the begotten of God are come to know the

vertue

vertue of the Divine Life of Chriſt Jeſus, their feeding and their nouriſhment is by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and they grow up to Life Eternal by that Divine and Heavenly Gift, that God the Father hath beſtowed upon them, through his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and they enjoy the Communion of Saints through this Divine Head of the Church that Communicates of his Life and Vertue through every Member, by which they are Sanctified, and every day more and more prepared for that Living and Eternal Inheritance, prepared for the Children of God.

And where there are a People that are thus gathered into the Life of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they are able to draw nigh to God, they feel the Power of Enterance, becauſe their Sin is removed that did formerly lie at the door, and the way is opened and conſecrated for them to draw nigh and partake of the Table of the Lord; by which they grow ſtronger and ſtronger in his Might and Power, and are thereby enabled to perform the whole will of God, and that Divine Worſhip and Religious Service, which God requireth at their hands in their day.

For it is very certain, and we have found it by experience, the words of our Lord to his Diſciples

Disciples of old, *without me* (saith he) *ye can do nothing.* For though People may meet together, and may pretend and set up a Form of Worship and of Religion in their own will, yet it all amounts to nothing with respect to acceptance with the Lord; there is no return in their Souls, no addition of Life, nor encrease and growth of Life; they are not nearer the Kingdom than when they first believed, but many times further off, by leaning upon a formality, and not really entering into the work of God, nor travelling out of Death into Life, for there must be Path, and a travelling in it; the Soul must have an exercise through the Power and Life of Jesus for the overcoming of Death, that did separate from God, and a preparing for Life, that Life that unites us to God again; and when People are in earnest in this travel, they are really resigned up to the government, direction, and leading of him that is gone before, that hath made a way for us, and will further our Progress towards the Kingdom of God.

And therefore, my Friends, you know the way, and know how the Power hath reached to you, and hath opened your understandings that you may be faithful to that power in your own Souls, and may have the true

true uſe and improvement of this, and all other ſuch Mettings as this; for the gathering of your Minds out of all viſible and changeable Objects, unto that Life which God hath revealed, that ſo in the exerciſe of it, you may hold your fellowſhip with God, and with one another; here is the bond of Perfection, here is that in which God hath Created Peace and Reſt, and Joy for his People, ſo far as every one *is* Partaker of this innocent Life, and feels himſelf changed into it, they are gathered into the Church, and they are gathered into fellowſhip with the head of it, and are comforted in their Memberſhip, in their partaking together.

Though I be but a little one, yet I partake of the ſame vertue which the Lord adadminiſtreth to the greateſt Saints, while I am waiting upon him, and of the ſame Divine Conſolation, and Operation, and Power that weaneth me more and more from the World, and that which is corruptible, and raiſeth up in me daily more and more fervent deſires after that Bread which periſheth not.

Now herein Men and Women have an evidence of that Chriſtianity in themſelves, the *Spirit* of God *bearing* Record and *Witneſs to their Spirits*, which all the looſe Profeſ-

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ſors of Chriſtianity in the World are ſtrangers to, their evidence in themſelves, being againſt them; they ſeek to have evidence without them, and to gather up ſome kind of marks and tokens, and ſayings, and ſentences from without, to make them believe that they are in Covenant with God, and that they are in a ſtate of Salvation by Chriſt; but he that truly believeth, hath an evidence of his Chriſtianity, and of his Reconciliation with God: and he hath this evidence in himſelf, a Divine Spiritual Teſtimony that anſwereth to his own Spirit that witneſſeth to him, that he is one of the Children of God.

And my Friends, to this you are called, whether you are come to it or no, it is this you are called to with a Heavenly call; that you might no longer live in the Rudiments of this World, to be ſeeking and looking here and there, for a ground of Peace and of Reſt; a ground of Hope, but may know and feel the ſame thing, the ſame ground of Eternal hope that the Saints of old had, what is that? What reaſon did they give and render of their hope of Eternal glory? The Apoſtle tells you plainly the ground or reaſon of their hope of being glorified in the World to come, was *Chriſt in them the hope of Glory*? they witneſſed that Chriſt

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gave his Life for the World. Take the Glorious Teſtimony that the Apoſtle did bear in one of his Epiſtles, ſaith he, *the life was manifeſted in me*; it was not covered up or hidden that People could not find it: God was pleaſed to bring it to *Light by the Goſpel*: When a thing is brought to light you may ſee in. This he affirmed in his day, and the ſame is affirmed in our day. The Life is manifeſted, what Life? Not the Life of this World, but a Life not defiled, not polluted, but the Life that is of God, a Heavenly Life that is Holy and Pure; that Life is manifeſted; we have ſeen it, and we exhort all to lay hold of it, to lay hold of Eternal Life; ſome had a ſight of it, that had not laid hold of it; they ſaw it in a Viſion, and they might ſay poſſibly, Oh that I could live ſuch a Life, that there were no ſin in me, in my words, or thoughts, or actions, what a gracious Life would that be! They had ſeen that Life, they had taſted of it, but they did not lay hold of it, but let it go by them: take heed of that, when you have ſeen it with open eyes. *Bleſſed are your eyes for they have ſeen, and your ears for they have heard*, ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples. They ſaw that Life that was holy, harmleſs, and undefiled; lay hold

hold on this Life, especially when you are thus assembled together in a solemn manner in the presence of the Lord waiting to behold it, and to see it more and more discovered to you, and labour to have that gathering Power that will bring you to it, that you may know the strength that comes by it to the Soul.

There is none of you but you will meet with Temptations in this World, that will draw you into Death and Darkness, to things *That are Carnal, and Sensual, and Devilish* sometimes. How shall I stand if I be not centered in that Life, that was before the World began, and before the Devil was? If I labour to feel the influence of that Divine Power, this is able to keep me; my Faith tells me so: I know that Power is able to keep me, if I keep in the exercise of it. The trust of a true Believer is, that whatsoever Temptations and Tryals they are exercised with; they know one already come *In whom they have trusted, who is both able and willing to deliver them.* So by this means he is kept harmless, and innocent, and blameless in his Life and Conversation. Thus you might be kept if you would regard, and have respect to the Life that is manifested in you.

Whosoever

Whosoever comes to know, and feel, and witness in their Souls the discovery and revelation of the Life of Jesus; they know there is in it a certain Dominion over that which is contrary to it, and you have many of you had experience of the exercise of the Power of God in your own Hearts; that hath inabled you to reign over those things, that have formerly ruled over you: That you can now subdue vain thoughts, and evil desires, that you can withstand Temptations that come from without and from within. Now if you could do this, and if ever you have done it; you did it by that Power that God discovered and revealed in you from Jesus Christ: You had not such hold of this once before you believed, but by believing the word of God sent unto you; it being fixed by Faith in the Heart, *That Faith which is the operation of God*; You could then do that which you could not do before, and forbear that which you was led away by. These experiences which God hath given you should encourage you to hold on in your Labour and Travel, and engage you *To grow in the Grace of God, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Whatsoever is propounded by men in the Profession of Religion, this ought to be our design

design and end in the discovery that is made to us of the Life of Christ; that we may grow in it, and live in it; (indeed there is great talking of it) but we should labour to shew forth the Resurrection of that Life in us.

They that come to be baptized for the Dead, baptized into the Death of Christ: The Apostle tells you, *In that he died he died unto Sin.* There are none baptized for the Dead, made partakers of the Death of Christ, but those that die unto Sin as he did. Though Christ had no Sin, yet he died unto Sin. What use did he make of this? That Christ knew no Sin, but yet did take our Sin upon him; *He died unto Sin, that they which did partake of his Death, might be partakers of his Resurrection.* He Liveth again, and after Death Riseth again.

Those that partake of this Death unto Sin, are Crucified unto this World, and have taken up Christs Cross, and are Dead to all the Pleasures and Delights of the World, which are whithered away and come to nothing. What do they Live to now? To Righteousness, Holiness, Chastity, Temperance; these are pleasant to them, these come to live to Righteousness through

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the Power of him that loved them. This ſhews the Glory and the Power of the Grace of God: It is the Grace of God that worketh ſuch a change in a Man or Woman. They that delight in Sin and Wickedneſs, in that which is corrupt and ungodly, they have no delight in this, no delight in Sobriety, Chaſtity, Holineſs and Purity of mind. Where did it work ſuch a change? In all that are freely given up to it: Where any one is given up to that Life, the grace of God hath the praiſe of it: This is the Exaltation and Praiſe of the Power of God; ſo that others may find by this, they may by it come to believe, and by believing to be ſaved.

Thus the Goſpel hath gone forth, from one to many, and from many to many more, and is encreaſing more and more; for Grace, Mercy and Peace are multiplied, by which the Heritage of God, and ſo every Man and Woman that partake of this Life, are gathered into their Fellowſhip.

So that your end in coming to theſe Meetings, is not ſo much to hear what this, and that, and the other Friend ſaith; but what you have in your ſelves to witneſs to: The Divine Operations of the Power of God in your Souls, bringing down ſomething that

is to be brought down, and raising up something that is to be raised. Temptation to Sin hath more prevalency upon me, than it hath upon this, and that, and the other man. I am not come to their degree, yet it is better with me than it was at my first convincement: If thou dost say this to deceive others, Cry to God, and Pray earnestly that all that may be brought down which is contrary to his Grace. If thou say and profess this, if at the same time there is a deceitful Heart to strengthen that which is known by the Light of Christ, to be against the truth of God: How will this appear at the Great Day of God? The Eye of God is upon thy Hypocrisie, He that *Never Slumbers nor Sleeps*, he beholds thee; if there be any Sin that thou wouldest keep and save alive, if thou make a Profession, and notwithstanding sayest, this Sin I will keep: *The Lord Pardon me in this thing.* Like *Naaman* the Servant of the King of *Assyria* who said to the Prophet, *Thy Servant henceforth will neither Offer Burnt Offering, nor Sacrifice to other Gods, but unto the Lord. In this the Lord pardon thy Servant that when my Master goes into the House of* Rimmon *to Worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow my self in the House of* Rimmon

Rimmon: *When I bow my self in the House of* Rimmon, *the Lord pardon thy Servant in this thing.* He knew if he bowed not, the King would take notice of the alteration of his gesture, therefore he would bow in the House of *Rimmon*: That Sin he would save alive under a Profession: That Hypocrisie the Lord did abominate.

Be upright in the sight of God, and be faithful to your own Souls; if it be so, then every Sin will be a burthen, and you will long to be rid of it; if it be so, you know whose hand it is that hath brought you so far; if you be real and cordial, and give up your selves to Jesus, That *Work which he hath begun in you, he will finish for you.* He will finish it for you, stand out with him in nothing; you give up your selves to him, and joyn not with his Enemies; take heed of hearkning to them, take heed of every Sin that will at last be a burden and oppressive to your Souls.

But if you Live this Heavenly Life of Jesus; you will be set at liberty, to have Dominion over Sin, and stand without Guilt before the Throne of God. Friends, let your Hearts be deeply affected with the great mercies that God hath bestowed upon you,

and for giving you that Divine Life that *Is acceptable in his sight*,

Many things have been done upon the account of Religion, and we could never be satisfied whether they were acceptable to God; we could not be satisfied whether we did any thing pleasing to God; we may say of them as the Apostle *Paul* of the *Jewish* Sacrifices, *there remains a conscience of Sin*, an accusing Conscience that tells us that Guilt is not removed, nor the Sin taken away, 'till the Lord opens this Divine Mystery to us, that our Justification must be by Faith in Jesus, that nothing could reconcile us to God but the Life of Jesus, and the merit of his Death.

This Life of Jesus was a holy, blameless, harmless, and innocent Life, which Life *he gave for the World*, which *Life is the Light of Men*; and our Souls being turned to this Life, we see the Glory and the Excellency of it, and desires are kindled in our hearts after it. Many have pursued and laboured and travelled, that they might come to the enjoyment of it: the very discovery of this Life ought to be highly prized, and your Souls affected with it, and when you have obtained it, you will say, O what a blessed Condition am I come into! that Christ hath manifested

manifested his Divine Power in me, not only in *Reconciling me to God*, but taking away the Conscience of Sin; by that also the Accuser is cast out, and I may now sing to God Songs of Deliverance. Now you taste of the Mercies that God hath bestowed upon you, this will affect your Souls with a Child-like submission and subjection to him, that hath begun to save and deliver you, that so you may resign up your selves to his will, and forsake the World, and the things of it.

Now when they come to such a Meeting as this, their minds may be retired, and they may be sensible of the Power of Truth upon their hearts, but for want of keeping their subjection to the Divine Power that hath opened their Understandings when they come into the World again, they are ensnared and entangled, and many times, for want of watchfulness, through a looseness of mind, and unrulines of their tongue, they run into anger and passion, and this grieves the Holy Spirit of God. And how should you come to God through the Mediatour, when you grieve his Spirit, and quench the motions of it?

These things have been hurtful to many, that for their time might have been Pillars

in the House of God. Take heed of this, and let the goodness of God dwell upon your minds, that you may feel and experience the inward administrations of it; there are many that are much affected with the outward Ministry, and are very desirous to hear the Servants of God declare the things that God hath wrought for them, and in them, and the wonderful things that God hath opened to them; yet when you have heard all that Men can say about it, if the Divine Ministry of the word of God doth not make powerful impressions upon you, and sanctify and renew your Souls, the outward Ministry of the Word will do you no good.

Now that you may be established in the truth that you have been taught, this Testimony ariseth in me, to desire every one to heed and attend to the manifestation of this Life of Jesus in your selves. Whatsoever God hath bestowed upon me or another, you may perish for all that, and I am not the better for what God hath bestowed upon you, but may perish notwithstanding; but that God hath manifested Eternal Life to my Soul, let that be every ones Center: this will make you holy and blameless, and preserve you in every State, and in the hour of Temptation, and in the midst of Snares;

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this will be a Bulwark to you; this will be as the Walls of Sion, which is the Salvation of the Lord. That ſo you may be preſerved ſenſible of the goodneſs of the Lord: That Grace, Mercy, and Peace may be multiplied in your boſoms; this will make you dear and affectionate one to another.

Though there may be an external Fellowſhip among thoſe that Preach and profeſs the ſame Doctrine, yet when they break off from that, when once Men depart from the power of truth, they grow ſtubborn and rebellious; but when Men come to be gathered into the inward Fellowſhip that ſtands not in terms and words, but in the Revelation of Chriſt, and in the Participation of his vertue and goodneſs; the more you are united in this, the more you are Knit one to another, and become one, and uſeful and helpful one to another.

The Lord vouchſafe to every one of you a taſt of his goodneſs, and you will prefer it above all that the Devil and his Inſtruments can preſent; but if you retire more into this Heavenly and Divine Life of Jeſus, you will feel and enjoy more Peace and Satisfaction, and true Conſolation in your Souls, than I, or any Man in the World can tell you of.

Sermon VI.

The Kingdom of God within.

Preached at Grace Church Street, July 26. 1691.

YOU have read and heard much concerning the Day of the Lord, as a Great and Notable Day; many of you are now Living Witneſſes that the Great and Notable Day of the Lord is coming, in which the Accompliſhment of Great and Notable Things, the Mighty Works of God, which have been Propheſied of may be lawfully expected. It is the work of every Chriſtian to wait upon the Lord in the light of this Day, and to be acquainted with the Works of the Lord, both inwardly and outwardly; for the Day of the Lord is a Day of Power, and that Power of God work-

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eth wonderful things; and if we are not kept in the light of that Day, the Lord may work great things, and we not know it; we ſhall be looked upon as careleſs and negligent Witneſſes of the Works of the Lord, as thoſe that do not regard them. If you would be Faithful Witneſſes, you muſt have regard to the Works of the Lord, and the Operation of his hands. One that is minded to be a Faithful Witneſs, he will take notice of what is ſaid and done: you are called to be Witneſſes of the Works of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of his doings; you muſt ſtand where you may hear, and ſee, and underſtand what the Lord is about to do at this time.

In your Teſtimony and Witneſs-bearing, the greateſt thing we have to expect in this Day of the Lord, is, that God will ſet up the Kingdom of his Son Chriſt Jeſus: and unto this all the Prophets did bear witneſs in their time, and now it is our turn to bear witneſs of it by ſenſible and living experiences of the accompliſhment of thoſe things that they Propheſied of, that the Lord will ſet up the Kingdom of Chriſt, and bring down and lay waſt the Kingdom of Antichriſt. This our Saviour taught his Diſciples to pray for Sixteen Hundred Years ago,

that the Kingdom of God might come: and all the true Disciples of Christ ever since have prayed for the coming of his Kingdom, and many of them have seen the coming of it, and rejoyced; and others have died in the Faith of it, and have been gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

But, my Friends, that which chiefly concerns us at this Day, is to behold the Kingdom of Christ, the Eternal Son of God within us, to go forward and prosper; and the Kingdom of Antichrist suppressed and destroyed, and utterly laid waft; and this is wrought two ways, 1. inwardly, 2. outwardly.

First, inwardly, there is a greater inclination in the minds of People to look more at the operation of Gods power in this great work outwardly, than to look at it inwardly, but unto that there must be a daily Cross taken up, and it is my business at this time to tell you in the Name of the Lord, that your Duty and mine is to turn our minds to the working of the Power of God in our selves, and to see that other Kingdom of the Man of Sin weakned and brought down within us, and the Kingdom of the Son of God set up within us; then there is no fear but he will carry on his

work

work outwardly, and we ſhall ſee as much of that work as belongs to our Generation: but the great Matter and chief Concernment of you and me, is to ſee the Kingdom of God ſet up within us, which ſtands in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; our buſineſs is to wait till we ſee the Righteouſneſs of this Kingdom ſet up within us in our Hearts and Souls, and to have a real change made.

We all know, and we muſt confeſs, that we have been ſubject to the Man of Sin, whatſoever we are now. We have ſeen the Reign and Government, the Rage and Tyranny of the Wicked one that hath led us into Rebellion and Diſobedience to the Lord our Maker; how do we like that Government to be Ruled by the Devil, and to be led Captive, and to be made to do his Will, and to Rebel againſt God that gave us our Life and our Breath, and Being? how do we like that Government of Satan? I hope we do none of us like it. It was ſo with me, and they that are under the Tyrannical Government of Satan, have many Cries and Wiſhes in their Souls, that they were freed and delivered from it, and brought under the Government and Obedience of Chriſt Jeſus; and that they were able to

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ſerve God as they ought to do, that they might be tranſlated from the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, into the Kingdom of the bleſſed and dearly beloved Son of God.

This hath been the cry of ſome ever ſince they have known the World, and I am perſwaded it is the cry of many at this day; I have good news to bring you, not that the day of your Redemption draws nigh, but that it is come; the day of Redemption is now come, and there are a great many bleſſing and glorifying the Name of God that they are redeemed and delivered from the bondage of Corruption, and have more joy and delight in the ſervice of God that made them, than ever they had in the ſervice of the God of this World.

But may not ſome ſay, how ſhall this great work be wrought? for it is a great work, and we verily think that nothing but an Almighty Power can effect it; for there are many in this Aſſembly have been trying to no purpoſe, and done what they could in their own ſtrength to deliver their own Souls from Death, and yet they find themſelves in bondage ſtill, nay, they have called in the help and aſſiſtance of thoſe that they thought to be ſtronger than themſelves, and all have failed, and they are yet weak and intangled,

intangled, and they cannot find themſelves at liberty to ſerve the Lord as they ought to do.

I am of this mind, that nothing but the Almighty power of God can do it; and when you come to to my experience, to know this as I have done, then I hope you will ſeek after that, and you will ſee good reaſon for it, and you will then come to this Poſition, if the Lord doth not help me I am undone; if the Lord puts not forth his Almighty Power I muſt then periſh, for there is no other Power can deliver me: when you come to know this, what muſt you do? Why, you muſt wait for the Revelation of that power that will take you off from all truſt and confidence that you have ever had in any thing elſe; a Man that hath nothing to truſt to but the Almighty Power, and Mercy and Goodneſs of God, he puts his whole truſt and confidence therein, or elſe he knows he muſt periſh.

When a Man or Woman comes to this paſs, that they have nothing to rely upon but the Lord, then they will meet together to wait upon the Lord: and this was the firſt ground and motive of our ſetting up Meetings; and I would to God that that was the uſe that every one would make of them that

come to them, then they would be juſtly and properly uſed according to the end of the inſtitution of them at firſt; we ſhould uſe them as poor deſolate helpleſs People that are broken off from all their own confidence and truſt, and have nothing to rely upon but the mercy and goodneſs of God; and if he pleaſeth to reveal his power among us, we know that he is able to ſave us, and we have met with the Revelation of Gods Power, and when we have met together in ſimplicity of Mind, the Lord was pleaſed to communicate his Spirit to us, and open a door for us, and diſcover and reveal to us that it was the day of his Power. And when we came to examine our ſelves whether we were willing in this day of Gods Power (for the Prophet gives us a note of diſtinction between the People of God, and other People; *Thy People ſhall be willing in the day of thy Power*; which is as much as to ſay, God diſcovers and reveals his Power to them, ſuch a People are willing to give themſelves over to the government of it, when we found we were ſubject to it,) we had joy in believing, before we attained the end of our hope; it was gladneſs to us that we found our ſelves willing, and I am perſwaded that every one of you would be glad to find your ſelves willing

ling to part with that which you cry out of.

What a cry is there of our Bondage and Corruption, and of our being led Captive by our Lusts? we may hear such a cry from one end of the Kingdom to the other: People cry out of the Bondage of Corruption, and of their subjection to Sin and Satan: I would they were in earnest; there is not that earnestness and reality in Men and Women that God looks for, and so there comes nothing of it. There is no redemption and no deliverance, the Lord doth not hear them; though they come now a days into his Presence to offer up their Prayers and Supplications, I would have you be in good earnest, I wish well to you all, and it would be hard to say that you do not wish well to your selves: Here lies your welfare, that you find your selves willing to be subject to the Power that made you; you have been subject doubtless to the Power that destroyed you; that Power that never gave you Life and Breath, hath been instrumental of your Destruction: The Power of the God of this World never did men good, but destroyed them, deceived them, and deprived them of their Lives.

Now

Now if there was but a willingneſs in every one of us freely to give up our ſelves to that Power that Created us to obey his will: I am ſure there is never a Man or Woman among us ſhall long be without the knowledge of it. If I am but willing to be ſubject to the Law of him that made me, it will not be long before he diſcover it to me, and reveal his Power in me in the glory and excellency of it; that Power which is more able to preſerve me, than all the Power of Men on Earth, or all the Power of the Devils in Hell is able to deſtroy me. When the Lord ſhall diſcover and reveal his Power in you, you will be willing to be ſubject to it.

But methinks the ſound and noiſe of Fleſh and Blood grows loud here. I would be ſubject to God, but I would not have him croſs mine intereſt, and deprive me of that I love and thriſt after; I would not have him imbitter my Carnal Delights and Pleaſures, and undo me as to my Reputation in the World.

You may ſee whence this comes that you would make a bargain and draw a contract with the God of your Lives about theſe things, this is a Nonſenſical thing; becauſe of all People in the World, you are a Peo-

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ple that have had a veneration for the Holy Scriptures, the Scriptures of Truth; and have been acquainted with them ſo familiarly as with any Book in the World, wherein you find Articles drawn, long ago fixed and ſealed, and no new ones are to be drawn. If any one will be my Diſciple, *John* or *Thomas*, *James* or *Peter*, or whoever he be, he muſt take up his Daily Croſs and Deny himſelf, and Follow me. Now here is a contract made, therefore turn aſide from all kind of Reaſoning and Conſulting with Fleſh and Blood.

If you will become Spiritual, and partake of Spiritual Bleſſings and Benefits; I would adviſe you to turn from all kind of reaſonings that come from the Pit of Darkneſs, that hath thus far deceived you, and will ruine you for ever, if you hearken to them: For aſſure your ſelves new Goſpel terms no man can make, and if any come to Preach new Goſpel terms, count him a deceiver; for there is no poſſibility of being a Diſciple of Chriſt, but by taking up a Croſs Daily, and Denying our ſelves and Following him as our Leader and Guide. To him I muſt go, and go in no other way, ſpeak nothing, or do nothing but what is Holy and Pure; he muſt conduct me in my walking, guide me in

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my way, and justifie me in it: This is to be a true Disciple of Christ.

As soon as he comes to adhere and joyn to the Power of God revealed in his Soul, he sees the coming of the Kingdom of God; he sees it at a distance, he saith within himself, and makes this conclusion, I will follow my Captain. I will become subject to the Kingdom of Christ. If I obey this Divine Principle of the Grace of God and the Gospel of Christ, I shall be his Disciple. I read in his blessed Book, *That as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Children of God.* I am not to propose new terms, but to accept of the old terms of the Gospel of Christ; I see that the Kingdom of God is to be set up, and the Kingdom of the Devil to be brought down in me: If I followed this Divine Principle, I should never follow the Devil more; if he would have me Lie, I shall refuse and say I cannot do it; if he would have me run into vain and corrupt Communication and foolish jesting, that will be a bridle to me that I cannot do it.

I speak now to persons that live under the Light of the Gospel of Christ, and that are subdued by his Grace; I would speak that which all the Logick in the World cannot overthrow, that which the most cunning

Logician

Logician with all his Wit and Quirks cannot refute and prove erroneous: If a man be led by the Spirit of God he cannot Lie; this is a common cure for all men, if I be led by the Spirit of Truth, and hearken to the Principle of Truth in my own Soul; this will cure and heal me of the wounds and maladies of my corrupt Nature, and set me at liberty from my old Master; I do not like his Service.

I hope if any of you like the Servitude and Bondage of Sin and Satan, you will desire Liberty before you die. Why do not you desire it now? It may be thou thinkest to enjoy a little Liberty, and Reputation, and Pleasure in Sin for many years, for Six or Seven, Nine or Ten years, and then break off from it, and repent and turn to God; How dost thou know that thou hast ten days to live? It is of high concernment to every one of us to wait for a discovery of Gospel Liberty, and an ability and power in his Soul to enable him to break off from the Servitude and Bondage of Sin and Satan that he hath so long lived under; and to wait upon God with Patience for the setting of his Soul at Liberty, and setting up the Kingdom of Christ within him, and pulling down the Kingdom of Satan, that he may be

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brought into the Kingdom of Christ; that consists in *Peace and Righteousness and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* These are the things that follow one another: when Righteousness is set up in me, I shall not be disturbed, I shall have Peace; and if I have Peace I shall have Joy, and this Joy is in the Holy Ghost; the Apostle saith the Kingdom of God consists in these things.

Now that every one might be persuaded that God hath given a measure of his Grace to them, as well as to other folks: Let them consider and say within themselves, God hath not shut me out of the number of his People, He hath knocked at the Door of my Heart, to bring me to Repentance, he hath waited upon me so long, surely he hath a mind to save me: Would he call upon me, but that he intends I should repent and turn to him?

But where is the Power, You will say, Knocking at the door of the Heart? and checks of Conscience we understand them, but we understand not where the Power is to be conformable to the Will of God.

People will never understand it while they are in the Kingdom of Satan, and under the the Power of the Prince of Darkness; the Apostle

Apoſtle tells us, *That the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them that believe not; leſt the Light of the Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt who is the Image of God ſhould ſhine into them.* If men ſaw the Beauty of the Goſpel they would run after it, and embrace it; therefore the Devil blinds their minds that they ſhould not ſee the Beauty and Amiableneſs of the Goſpel, and like the terms of it: He hath the Rule and Government of the Hearts of the Children of Diſobedience. So long as I live in Subjection to that Deviliſh Helliſh Power which leads me forth into Sin; I ſhall be a ſtranger to Gods Power that would enable me to break off from it.

You never read in Scripture of any that ever came to be ſaved by the Power of God, but there was Faith mixed with it, that came to joyn with that Power of God. Our Saviour ſaid to the impotent man, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole*; thy Faith joyning with that Power of God: *We ſhall be made ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might*; and be able to withſtand Temptations.

As ſoon as the Soul of Man joyns with the Grace of God, he doth forſake the ſervice of his old Maſter and Governour: Sin ſhall no longer have Dominion over him; though he

he may meet with the ſame Temptation, i ſhall not have the ſame power over him but he will be enabled by the grace of Go to withſtand it, and overcome it. If yo ask ſuch a Man, how it is that he overcome that Temptation that formerly prevaile over him; he will tell you, I have now a Helper, I am now joyned to the Grace o God in my Soul, therefore do I withſtan Temptations, and have power over them Thus comes the Kingdom of Chriſt to b ſet up in the Soul, and this is that which will fit and prepare us for the everlaſting Kingdom of God: they that do wait upon God, ſhall ſee this work wrought inwardly in them, they know more by Faith than they can ſee by Senſe.

I know and am certain that the Power the Devil hath in the World ſhall be broken down, and Righteouſneſs ſhall be exalted, and juſtice and equity ſhall prevail in the Nations. I ſhall not perhaps live to ſee it, but I may ſee it by Faith, I may ſee enough for my generation, and they that live in the next generation ſhall ſee it alſo; for the Church of God is the ſame from one generation to another. Now unto us it is given to ſee the things that in former generations were Propheſied of, God having (ſaith the Apoſtle)

poſtle) *Provided ſome better thing for us, hat they without us ſhould no be made perfect.* The Church of God from one Genera-on to another have their meaſure and de-ree of ſervice, and bear their proper. Teſti-ony, and leave the reſt to ſucceding Gene-ations: it concerns us in our Generation to e a change made inwardly in our Souls, and he Kingdom of Chriſt ſet up within us, and he Kingdom of Satan brought down in our elves. This doth not concern my Son or Grandſon only, but it concerns me, and hen they grow up to mature Age, in their ime it will concern them: therefore that which is moſt profitable to us, is, that we have ſuch a ſtation, and ſtand in ſuch a place n our time, where we may ſee the work of God carried on.

I have conſidered many a time that there are many brave Men and Women in this Age, that might have been eminent Wit-neſſes of God in the World, and born their Teſtimony to his truth, but their Faith hath been weak and ineffectual: they have diſco-vered their unbelieving hearts, and have joyned with the common herd of the World, becauſe they thought ſuch great things could never be done, that the Kingdom of Satan could never be pulled down and deſtroyed, and

and the Kingdom of Chriſt ſet up within us. But I would hope better things of you, things that accompany Salvation; and that he that hath begun a good work in you, will carry it on to perfection: that Living Praiſes and joyful Thankſgivings may be rendered to him who alone is worthy, who is God over all, bleſſed for ever; to whom be Glory and Dominion for ever, and ever. *Amen.*

Sermon

Sermon VII.

The undefiled Way to Eternal Reſt.

Preached at Devonſhire-Houſe, *July the* 29th. 1691.

My Friends,

THE Lord will be with all his People, that are undefiled in the Way; hat are Spiritual Travellers walking in hat undefiled Way, that leads to an ndefiled Reſt. There are ſome that by his Way are enter'd into Reſt, that Reſt hich God hath prepared for them. We annot apply to our ſelves that promiſe that made to us of *entring into Reſt*, unleſs we e real and true Travellers in the Way that ads to it, for if we do, *We deceive our wn Souls.*

Therefore you that have had a Sight and

Viſion of the Way Everlaſting, that lead
unto a Holy Reſt, you are Engag'd Peop
to make ſtraight ſteps therein, and to have
your daily Care, and make it your contin
al Buſineſs, to look that your Goings an
Foot-ſteps are of the ſame nature and kin
that the Reſt is that you deſire to enter into
For it is an undefiled Reſt, that we all a
or ought to be Travelling after; therefo
every one of us muſt be undefiled in the Wa
and every Foot-ſtep muſt be of the ſame kin
and nature, and ſeparate from all that whi
defileth it and polluteth it; that ſo it m
have a tendency to the bringingof the So
nearer to its Reſt.

This Holy Reſt many Travellers have
tained by this Holy Travel, and many
ſtill in hope to attain it.

But now they that are full of hope of
taining this Reſt, but their Foot-ſteps a
Goings are not of the ſame nature and kin
they are not holy and pure, they are not
defiled: Theſe have not their Faces tr
Sion-ward, though the Face of their Pro
ſion may ſtand that way; but the L
looks at the Heart of every one, and
knows which way the Heart ſtands; t
who have their Hearts truly turned to
Lord, they have the mark of Holineſs

their Eye, and the mark of purity and righteouſneſs in all their Undertakings, becauſe they know there is no attaining to that Divine Reſt, but by a Holy Way and Travel, therefore their truſt and reliance is alone on the Lord, that is to keep them in all their Way, for if they be never ſo clearly convinced that Holineſs and Righteouſneſs is their Duty, and is the way whereby they may attain to the Kingdom of God, though they are never ſo fully convinc'd of it, yet there lies an impoſſibility of any walking therein without the Divine Aſſiſtance of the Grace of God; for though they have been convinc'd by the appearance of his Grace, and have had a light that openeth to them a ſight of theſe things, it is not this Sight and Viſion that will enable them *To run the Race that is ſet before them.*

For the manifold impurities and hindrances which are in our Way, between our coming out of *Egypts* Land, the Bondage of Corruption, and our entring into the Kingdom of God, are too mighty and too great for any Man with his knowledge and ſtrength to overcome. The Children of *Iſrael* might as well have gone through the *Red Sea* without the help of God, as the Chriſtian Tra-

veller can go through the many difficulties and the many impediments that he is to meet with in his Way, without the assistance of God's holy Spirit.

My Friends, It hath been a Labour and Travel at this time upon my Mind, that all whom God hath so signally Blessed with the Knowledge of the Truth; that you may see your Way, and most clearly know and understand, that your Way leads to Life Eternal; that all and every one of you in your particular Meetings, are to have a dependance upon that which can help you in your Way.

For I have seen too many that have had a wrong dependance, after they were rightly Convinc'd, and after they have had a true knowledge of their Way wherein they should walk; they have too much trusted to openings and sights which they have receiv'd; they have thought their Mountain so sure, and that their *Feet have been past sliding*, that there hath grown up a state of presumption that they have thought they should never turn aside, and have not had due regard to the renewing of the divine Power of God in their Souls, that God's Children always must have. They have (as I may so say) forgotten what our Lord said, *Without me*

ye can do nothing; they have paſſed a Sentence upon that Doctrine in their minds, and they have thought they could do ſomething, that they could withſtand Temptation, that they could do ſome Work for God, and Service to God without the divine aſſiſtance of that Power that did beget them; and alas, the leaſt they have ſuſtained hath been, that they have fallen into Evil, and they have defiled their Way, and run into Temptations, though it hath pleaſed the Lord, whoſe Mercy is Infinite, to pull them many times back again out of the ſnare which they were fallen into, and to take them up again, and to waſh them, and cleanſe them, and purifie them, and ſet their Feet on a ſure place. This was more than they deſerved, but his Mercy and Goodneſs and Tenderneſs is over all his Works.

This he hath wrought for many a one, and not only once, but many times; it is hard venturing; it had been better if ſuch a one had never fallen, or that their Foot-ſteps had never ſlid from the ways of the Lord, than after *they are fallen to be renewed again by Repentance.* It hath cauſed ſore Judgment and Condemnation and Anxiety of Spirit: And they have given their old Enemy an advantage to whiſper in their Ears. Thou haſt

loſt thy ground; thy Sins are gone over thy Head; and thou ſhalt never find Repentance. Theſe are the Words of the Wicked one who ſeeks occaſion againſt us; and through our careleſneſs, and not being watchful we put an advantage into his Hand: Now ſeeing you know he is vigilant, and ſeeks occaſion that he may turn you out of your Way before you attain to the end of it; you ought to be vigilant to keep occaſions from him.

But ſome may ſay, how may I keep occaſions and advantages from the Enemy? I anſwer, the way hath been often told you, and I dare ſay moſt of you have tryed it, and found it to be true; that ſo long as you have remained in a watchful State and Poſture, and have had your minds exerciſed by the Grace of God; by which you were convinced of your Sin, and by which your Duty was manifeſted to you: So long you gave the Enemy of your Souls no occaſion; but the Truth preſerved you wherein you truſted, and wherein you hoped and waited for the vertue and power of it. Did you find want of ability then? Did the Enemy prevail then? He did not ceaſe to Tempt when you was in the moſt watchful State of a Chriſtian, the Devil did not then ceaſe to tempt you; but you found in your

power that reſiſted him; and ſaid, *Get thee behind me Satan.*

So long as you are upon your watch, ſo far as you keep your mind fixed upon the Divine Power; ſo long you are in a ſure place, and whoſoever turns aſide from this they ſuffer great harm and prejudice; and if ever they be reſtored again it is with loſs and damage and ſore exerciſe; and if they be not reſtored, they are loſt to all Eternity: *Then it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered to them:* And then they ſaid within themſelves, this muſt be the way.

Sirs, theſe things pertain to your Everlaſting welfare; I ſpeak to you as to a People that God hath abundantly Loved; and it hath been far beyond any thing of deſert: He hath made known his ways to you, the Lord may ſay concerning you of this City as of old; *What could I have done more for my Vineyard that I have not done?* So he may ſay concerning you: What could I have done more to make them a grown People? a holy People, an intire People that *They may bear my Name, and walk before me in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all*

the days of their Lives. What ſhould have been done more for them?

But this is an Exerciſe to us whom God hath bleſſed and ſet as watchmen, to behold and ſee the ſtate of his People; and to feel and bear the burthens that are to be born; and this is the great burden, that after all that God hath done, and that we do in the hands of God; all that is neceſſary for the welfare of the People: Yet here are ſome that turn aſide, and here are ſome that have defiled their way, and we teſtifie in the name of the Lord, that whoſoever walks in a defiled Way, ſhall never come to an undefiled Reſt; therefore that you do not attain to that undefiled Reſt, it is becauſe ye have been defiled: Seeing the Holy converſation of the People of God is the effect of the working of his own Power and Spirit.

Here comes the Reſt, by and through a Mediator, even Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous; who is the Mediator between God and Man, and the Leader of all his People in the way of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs which he hath made manifeſt to them that believe and obey the Power: And *He hath purchaſed Eternal Salvation for all that Believe and Obey the Goſpel.* But the Tranſgreſſors do not obey the Goſpel; the Spirit of Chriſt doth not lead

lead you to Tranſgreſſion, and the Power and Light that comes from Chriſt doth not lead you to Pride, Vanity, Envy and Bitterneſs: Where-ever theſe things are led into, there is another Spirit, and that other Spirit hath another tendency, and it leads into the wrath of God.

And my Friends, this is that which my Soul deſireth at your hands, and it is for your good and advantage; it is my Duty to diſcharge my Conſcience, and to ſpeak plainly as the Lord ſhall give me utterance, to warn you that you abide in the Truth; for if ſo be you be not ſaved, but will turn aſide after your own Hearts Luſts, after your Pride and the Vanity of the World, and the Luſts thereof; you may blame your ſelves, and your *Iniquity will be your Ruine.* We that have given up our ſelves to God for your ſakes, and for the Churches ſake; we ſpeak theſe things which we have Learned of God, and we earneſtly preſs you that are convinced that you walk in the Truth which you have believed: There is no great need of more knowledge, and of the Viſion of Heavenly and Divine things; for abundance of you have ſeen more of the things of God than ever you have travelled and come up unto. I would to God that every one of you that

are convinced would come up *To the measure of the knowledge you have received*: O that you would answer the Lords Power in opening and discovering his Mind and Will concerning your Travel, and the things that belong to your Everlasting Peace, that your footsteps may be directed thereby. If you will walk in this undefiled way, you may lie down at Night, and rise in the Morning with Peace, and in the favour of the Lord, and have the answer of a good Conscience in his sight.

The means that must help and conduct us in this way, must be that familiar Converse that the Soul must have with something greater then it self; the Familiar Converse that the Soul must have with the Divine Power, with that manifestation of Divine Light and Grace, which through Jesus Christ God hath given unto you. For if a man prize and esteem the Truth never so much, and suffer never so much for it, and Love the Minister never so much; if he keep not a Familiar Converse with the Truth; notwithstanding all his Profession of Love to the Truths of the Gospel, and the Preachers of it, he will Reproach it:

Though

Though he Profeſs and ſay I love thee, I love thee; though he hath ſuffered much in the way, yet if he love not the Truth in his own Heart, and deſire not to feel the excellency and the vertue of it; that man will certainly diſhonour the Truth, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

We warn you to take heed to your Way, and to your Feet in your Chriſtian walk, that you may come to have an *Abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God.* Pray to God that the work of Regeneration may be wrought upon you, that you may be born into another ſeed, and partake of the Divine Nature: Then, though the Devil aſſault you, he cannot overcome you; he will find nothing in you whereby to betray you into his hands, when that change is wrought, and when God hath made an alteration, and hath brought you out of the Love of the World, and the Love of Earthly things; *And ſet your Affections on things above, where Chriſt ſits at the Right Hand of God.* Now you can ſay here comes a Temptation with this inſtrument, and the other inſtrument, and the Devil layes things before me that he would have me to do; but I have no inclination to it, I have no mind to be ſucking at the Worlds breaſts;

but

but my mind is ſet upon this, that I may reach acquaintance with God, *Who will be a preſent help unto me, and tread Satan under my Feet.*

There is need of your continual care and vigilancy, and that you Watch and Pray that you may not enter into Temptation. It is not ſo eaſie a thing for a Man or Woman while they are in this World to do any thing without Sin, but God hath called you to a Holy Profeſſion; which is, that you ſhould do all you can do, to do every thing you do without Sin: *For whether you Eat or Drink or whatſoever you do; you ſhould do all to the glory of God.* Here is your Profeſſion, but where is the Life of it? It is only *The Children of God that are led by the Spirit of God.* This Spirit we would have in you, and we would have all you *That have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, to walk in him as you have received him:* Then you ſhall be kept undefiled in the Way, and delivered from Temptation.

To this end you muſt be ſtill waiting upon the Lord that you may have acquaintance with him from Day to Day; you are in the World, but you ſhould not be of the World: The Prayer of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to his Heavenly Father for his

Diſciples

Diſciples, was not that he ſhould *Take them out of the World, but keep them from the Evil.*

Merchants, Tradeſmen, and Shop-keepers have always ſomething to do in the World, but they ſhould Pray earneſtly that they may *Be kept from the Evil of the World.* There is nothing can be done in the World but there is evil in it, which we ſhall be overcome by if we do not keep our watch. In the Government of a Family there are occaſions and provocations given men to be Paſſionate and Furious; many occaſions are offered to Men and Women, but we ſhould not be tranſported and overcome: Our Profeſſion obliges us that when a Child or a Servant gives a provocation, we are not to behave our ſelves unſeemly and unbecoming our Holy Profeſſion; for it is not in their Power, nor in the Devils Power neither to kindle your Wrath and Anger into a Flame: If you be upon your watch, and wait upon the Lord; he will give you Wiſdom and Strength to ſtand againſt all Temptations whatſoever; and *To order your Converſation according to the will of God, and as becomes the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

In Merchandize and Buying and Selling there are Snares, and there is evil we may run into,

into, but here is our comfort and joy, there is no coertion, we cannot be forced to Sin, the Devil can only lay a temptation before me; if thou wilt tell a lye, equivocate, dissemble, here is an advantage for thee, but the Devil with all his subtilty, power, and allurements, cannot say, thou shalt run into this Sin, and be overcome by this Temptation; for though of our selves we can do nothing, yet in the name and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ *we can do all things*; we can do that which is just, and stand over the Temptation, and trample upon it, and *not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* When we have bought and sold, we may look back upon what we have done with pure Minds, and clean Consciences in the sight of God, and we may come off Victors, and *more than Conquerors* over Temptations, *through Christ that hath loved us.*

The more a Christian keeps himself unspotted, and the more watchful he is in his walking, he may go on from day to day, and see the snares of the Devil that lies in this Vanity, and the other Vanity and Temptation, and escape it.

I would I could say of some of you that when the Devil laid a snare before you, you did

did not run into it when you ſaw it. I have known ſome that have had underſtanding enough, that they need not to be told where the ſnare of the Devil lies; yet ſo it hath been, the Devil and their own hearts luſts have agreed together, and they have run into the Snare. This is from the Old Confederacy that Men have with Gods Enemy; *you are my Friends*, ſaith Chriſt, *if ye do whatſoever I command you*; if you are the Friends of Chriſt, you will be his Subjects, and yield Obedience to him: When he ſhews them a Snare they will keep out of it; this is the proof of a true Chriſtian, that he will be true in a time of Trial, and will truſt in that Divine Power that keeps him out of the Snare.

One thing more I would ſay, that Divine Fellowſhip that you have with Chriſt Jeſus, it conſiſts in holineſs of Life and Converſation, and the exerciſe of a good Conſcience towards God, and towards Men. It is in vain to tell me that you will walk in Unity with the Truth, unleſs you have Unity with the Truth in your own hearts; you cannot deceive the Lord, nor long deceive his People neither. Here is the Fellowſhip that you are to live in all your days, to live in Fellowſhip with the People of God, and Communion

munion of Saints; can the Saints have Communion in any thing but Holineſs? and Holineſs is a Bleſſed Sacred thing, *it becomes the Houſe of God for ever*; they that are Saints are ſanctified and made holy; and *he that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified, are all of one, for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them Brethren*, *Heb.* 2. 11. They that are ſanctified are become Saints, they bring forth the Fruits of Holineſs and Sanctification, and they are come into Fellowſhip with God, and one another; *Every Branch in me (ſaith Chriſt) that beareth not Fruit he taketh away, but every branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit.* That branch which beareth not Fruit, is caſt into the Fire and burned.

There are ſome that bring forth Fruit, but it is Fruit to the Fleſh, and the Wicked one, but I hope you are not of that number. Theſe ſeparate themſelves from the Life of the true Vine, theſe have no Fellowſhip nor true Memberſhip with the Church of Chriſt, while they walk as Captives to the Devil, and Sin; theſe are of the World, and not of the Church. If you would have Fellowſhip with the Church, do not think to have it by outward Conformity. Do not think

that

that this will maintain your Fellowſhip with Chriſt, without a Life of inward Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; for that day you break with the Truth in your ſelves, you break off your Fellowſhip with the Church of God, and break your peace with God, and can no way be reſtored again to the favour of God, but by an unfeigned Repentance, *For the Myſtery of Faith* is to be *held in a pure Conſcience*; how is my Conſcience defiled if I wrong not this or the other Man or Woman? ſome can hold the Myſtery of Faith ſo far as it conſiſts in a Profeſſion, they can profeſs it, and they can Preach it, but they have not held the Myſtery of Faith in Chriſt, ſo as to receive Life, and Vertue, and Comfort from him. You have got the Hiſtory of Words and Doctrines, but as ſoon as you defile your Conſciences by doing evil things, and depart from a Principle of Grace, as ſoon as you defile your Conſciences; you make Shipwrack of Faith.

But (my Friends) as you have a mind to continue and abide in the Faith, and in this Travel and Heavenly Journey, I would give you this as a certainty, it may do you good when my head lies low. The way to continue in the Church of God, and Communion of Saints, and to retain your Peace with

with God, is to keep a Familiar Converſe with the Truth in your own Souls, and it will keep you from falling, and lead and guide you in your Way, in your Travel and Journey to Heaven. As the Mother when her Child cries after her, but cannot go, ſhe takes it by the hand and leads it: ſo if you keep cloſe to the Truth, it can lead you through all Difficulties, through great Buſineſs as well as little, and deliver you from Snares and Temptations, and when you are aſſaulted it can bring you off clear. As for Communion with God, and Communion with the Saints and People of God, it ſtands in that Peace, and Purity, and keeping a Holy frame of mind in your Heavenly Travel, in the undefiled Way, that will at laſt bring you to the Undefiled Everlaſting *Reſt that remains to the People of God.*

Sermon

Sermon VII.

The Dawning of the Day of Grace and Salvation.

Preached in Grace-Church-Street, *Auguſt* 2. 1691.

My Friends,

YOU cannot but know and be ſenſible, that a Goſpel Day, a Day of Grace and Salvation hath Dawned upon you, and that the Light of it hath broken through many Clouds of Darkneſs, which ſometime you could not ſee through: This is an ineſtimable and unſpeakable mercy of God unto us, that the Light of the Goſpel of Salvation ſhineth upon a People, that without it muſt be miſerable.

There hath been a very Dark and Cloudy Day upon our Fore-fathers, and alſo upon us, in the days of our Ignorance. We are apt to

to wander hither and thither, and to be turned aside with the wind of Mens Doctrine, that we could not find a rest, a home or a settlement for our Souls in order to Life Eternal. And there be many have cryed unto God that he would please to reveal his Way, and to make it known unto them; and they have been apt to Covenant with the Lord, that if once they could come to a certainty, they would walk in it: Unto such as these the Lord hath bowed his Ear, and hath answered them; and in his answering the cry of the Soul, he hath brought Salvation near, and hath revealed the Power by which he would bring it to pass in every particular Soul that receiveth the Gospel of his Son.

But now Friends, you that are sensible of this Blessed & Glorious Visitation of this Gospel Day, in which *Salvation is brought near*; It is needful for every one to examine their own Hearts whether they have really received the Gospel, whether they have received and embraced the great bounty, and unspeakable blessing of the Gospel, with which the Lord God of Life hath visited us; or whether they have rejected it: For though it is our happiness to know the Visitation of Life, yet it doth not follow that every one that is

Visited

Visited will be made an Heir of it; for *There are many that fall short through their unbelief.* For there are many that have received the Gospel, who do disobey the Gospel of Christ; and so have not Eternal Life by it.

When People come to this serious Examination of themselves herein, then the Light and Grace that comes from Christ unto every one of us; both to him that rejects it, as well as to him that receiveth it; that will make known to them their State and Condition with respect to the Gospel of Christ: For there be a great many that by an Alienation of their minds from the Light of Christ Jesus, are apt to be mistaken in their State, and to make a better judgment of themselves and of their state inwardly than really it will amount to in the day that the Lord searcheth and tryeth them: But they that make a judgment of themselves, by the openings and discoveries that they have, through the Light of Christ Jesus (for so we are to do in this weighty matter;) they make a judgment of ther state and condition, according to the Evidence that the Spirit of God bears to their Spirits; and this I hope you will all say is a most certain Way: For if we go to compare our selves

one

one with another, and ſay, I am better than thee, and that man is better than I; here we are liable and ſubject to a great many Errours where there ought to be none. But if we come to meaſure and determine our preſent ſtate and condition by the Evidence of the Spirit of God, bearing witneſs with our Spirits; here we have a foundation to place an infallible and certain judgment upon: And they that are obedient to the Goſpel of Chriſt, are capable of giving a ſound judgment of their ſtate, becauſe they are made partakers through Chriſt of that Grace and Light and Truth which they ſhould be obedient to; and they are brought into a kind of knowledge and underſtanding of their Duty, whether they do it or no: And this knowledge and this underſtanding that God doth give them, makes them capable to paſs a right judgment upon their own ſtate. They will not call it a good ſtate, if it be an evil ſtate; and they will not call it an evil ſtate if it be a good one: They know it is good by the principle of Truth in their judgment.

Therefore ſince there are ſo many uncertainties in the World, and that men are ſo apt to take hold of an uncertain way of judging and determining, even in matters relating

relating to their Souls: There is a greater aptneſs in People to take hold of uncertainties in judging about the matters of their Souls, than in thoſe things that relate to their Bodies: Seeing People are ſo liable to it, it can do none of us harm to exhort one another, and move and ſtir up one another to make a calculation of their ſtate by ſomething that will not deceive. There are abundance deceived in this Countrey as well as other Countreys; we ſhall not need to go into forreign parts to find People deceived and deluded. It will not be amiſs to ſay, the Drunkard, the Swearer, and the Lyar, and the Oppreſſor, the Proud, the Malicious are deceived: If they were not ſo, they would never be overcome by the wicked One; the Author of all evil, he hath deceived them in that they ſhould think to go on in theſe things, and cry *peace, peace*, to one another, and in their own Souls; this is a great Deluſion, and the Devil is the great Deluder that they are deluded by: And it would be worth the while to find out *that* which ſhould make a man think himſelf in a happy ſtate and hope to enjoy Eternal Life with God and Chriſt while he goes on in Sin and Iniquity; it would be worth the while to find out the Deluſion.

There

There is nothing so proper to turn every one to the Grace of God, as *To search their own Hearts, and try their Ways.* This is that which will discover their thoughts, and make them known to themselves; this is Gods Grace and Gift to men while they are yet sinners and disobedient; he doth not with-hold his Grace, but gives his Grace, and Light, and Truth, *Even to the Rebellious: He giveth Gifts to men, even to the Rebellious*; that he might have a Place and dwelling among them, that they might know there is a God *That searches the Heart and tries the Reynes*, and judgeth all Unrighteousness. If God hath given thee so much Grace, that he might have a dwelling in thy Heart; Should not that restrain thee from Sin? That the Devil by his Temptations might not defile thee, and unfit thee for the Kingdom of God. When the Lord comes to search the Heart, it is in order to the purging of it, and the taking away of Iniquity and Sin that would unfit thee for his Kingdom. This is a better Way, and more excellent than Living to the Flesh, and fulfilling the Lusts thereof. Let People live never so much to their own Corrupt Wills in Pride, and Wantonness, and Looseness and the Vanity of their Minds; they will

not

not find ſo much true ſatisfaction and delight as in living a Holy Life, living in the fear of God, and avoiding Sin, and keeping themſelves from the Temptations and Snares of the Devil.

This is a more excellent Way, and it is our work and buſineſs to declare to People this more excellent Way, which all one time or other will confeſs: This is Irkſome, will ſome ſay, this will abate my Pleaſure and Delights in the World; and ſpoil my Secular Intereſt; if it were not for this reaſon, they would grant it were better to Live a Holy Life, and to Live in the Fear of God, than Live in the Service of the Devil; their carnal Intereſt lies in the way, and weighs down the Scale, but it is becauſe thou joineſt with it, otherwiſe the Devil, and all the Powers of Hell could not weigh it down; If People would conſider theſe things ſeriouſly, they would ſay, it is better to ſerve God that made them, and gave them Life, and Breath and Being; than him that would deſtroy them. And then when they meet with the Pleaſures and Delights of the World that the Devil lays before them, they would never weigh down the ſcale againſt a Divine Reaſon; if thou wilt give thy Heart to it, and ſeriouſly conſider it, it will weigh

down the ſcale againſt all Temptations t
live in Sin, and Pleaſure, and Jollity. I
thou wilt but joyn with this Divine Reaſo
that tells thee, theſe Carnal Pleaſures an
Enjoyments are not neceſſary for thy Soul
but it is neceſſary to live a Holy Heavenl
Life, and to ſerve the Lord that gave the
Life and Breath and all Things; that ha
vouchſafed thee manifold Preſervations
If thou wilt but joyn with the Divine Rea
ſon, and hearken to that which opens th
Truth in thy own Heart, all the Dev
can do cannot make thee ſerve him, fo
the Devil hath no Coercion, no Power t
force thee to commit Sin; he cannot mak
a man to work wickedneſs againſt his Will
He muſt firſt cloud the Underſtanding, an
work upon the Will, and allure and intic
the Affections by Earthly things: So tho
canſt not be forced by the Devil again
thy will to yield to his Temptations, t
commit any Sin; but thou muſt ſay, I wi
do it.

I confeſs when the underſtanding is br
bed and the will allured and ſeduced by th
Devils Temptations, there is no withſtand
ing them: But on the other hand, if me
would give up themſelves to the Power o
God; they would have Divine aſſiſtance, an
joy

joyning with that Power; they ſhould *Be more than Conquerours.* Therefore we cannot but be encouraged to keep in the way of the Lord, and have acquaintance with the Power of God which will preſerve you, and give you victory over all the Temptations and Aſſaults of the Devil; and without this Power you cannot overcome, but if you have the aſſiſtance of this Power, nothing will be too hard for you. When you are in ſtraits and in a helpleſs condition; you ſay ſometimes, and are ready to cry out, I ſhall not overcome my Spiritual Enemies, I ſhall never get victory over Sin and the World, and the Fleſh and the Devil; I ſhall never be able to withſtand his Temptations, but they will prevail over me all my days. No wonder you make this concluſion when you have parted with your Truſt and Dependance on that Power that is able to overcome the Devil, and baffle him in your Thoughts, Words and Deeds.

You may be ready to ſay, alas, of my ſelf I can do nothing, I am not able of my *Self ſo much as to think a good Thought*; yet by Divine Aſſiſtance I do many times think good thoughts: *In me, that is, in my Fleſh, there dwells nothing that is good:* Not in my Fleſh abſtractly; ſeparate from the Power

of God and the Divine assistance vouchsafed unto me. *In my Flesh dwells nothing that is good.* But if you take me as one that hath Faith in Christ the Mediatour, this Faith embraceth the tender of the Love of God in the Redeemer. And when I have this Faith, there dwels a good thing in me; and from this good thing that dwels in me, there flows forth good words and good actions; then you come to be acquainted with a Power greater than your own, and if you will trust in it you will be able to withstand Temptations: And when you are Tempted to any Sin, you will not be only able to withstand the Temptation, but to overcome it too; and to be more than Conquerors in your Spiritual Warfare. This relying upon, and trusting in the Power of God, is that which we call Faith; and this Faith is the Operation of God.

To speak in plain words, God will operate upon thy mind and make thee know that this is his Power, his Light, and Truth, and Grace, by which he would save thee. And after God hath wrought and operated upon thee in this manner, it is thy Duty then to believe in it, to put thy Trust and Confidence in it to be delivered. But though Faith be offered unto me, yet it is not forced upon

upon me; God hath offered Faith to all all men, but he doth not force it upon all men: All have an opportunity offered to them if they will but joyn with it; they may have Faith wrought in them, and be fitted and prepared for the Kingdom of God.

There are many that are convinced of the Truth of the Doctrine that we Preach to them, but they do not get into the Power of Truth; they will hear us Preach of the Power of Truth, and will hear what this man saith, and what the other man saith; and this will serve their turn, that they may talk of Religion, and make a Profession: But they do not seek after that Power that should enable them, *To work out their own Salvation.* These persons grow in knowledge, but they do not grow in Grace; they will embrace Truth as far as Doctrines and Words will go; they have Professed it, and they have suffered Reproach for it, and yet they have not received the Truth in the Love of it; they cannot reach to the Power of it; they glory in their knowledge and their understanding, but they come not to that which sanctifies them, they are not able to resist the Devil, and to stand against his Temptations; when a Temptation comes

they joyn with it, but they cannot withstand it: They come to the knowledge of Truth in Words, but they come not to the knowledge of the Power of it in ther Hearts and Minds so as to make them prepared vessels for Gods Honour; God is more dishonoured by them, than by those that never Professed his Name. They fall into the Temptation of the Devil, and never discern the Operation of Gods Power in their own Hearts.

2. There is another Errour as great as this; there are a great many that when the Lords Power hath wrought in their Hearts, and they have Truth opened to them in the Power of it, yet they have not believed in it, they have not had Faith wrought in their Hearts, they have not trusted in, nor relyed upon the Power; so they are weak and feeble; they have little Faith, which is next to none at all. If they have never so much knowledge, how easily can the Devil tempt them to Sin if they have not true Faith? *This is the Victory*, saith the Apostle *that overcomes the World, even your Faith.* This is not my Victory, that I see the Subtilty and Wiles of Satan, and know much; but that which is my Victory is my Faith: My trust is in the Power

Power of God, and my relyance upon him who is God mightier than all the ſtrength of Men and Devils; that God who knows my Heart. If I be faithful to him, and rely upon him by Faith, I ſhall reſiſt the Devil and withſtand his Temptations, I might get Victory over them.

This Power you may have by the Goſpel, but then you muſt be true to the Power of it in your ſelves, for I do diſtinguiſh between the Goſpel, as it is a Doctrine and Word Preached, and an Inviſible Divine Power working upon Men by the Preaching of the Goſpel; you will all hear the Goſpel Preach'd, though you be never ſo proud and huffy, and you will ſay it is true, but you can never come to the ſaving knowledge of the Goſpel it ſelf, till you find it working inwardly upon your ſelves.

We do not pretend to any power of opening Mens hearts, as God opened the heart of *Lidia*; but when People come to wait upon God with a ſerious and religious Mind, you will find the Power of the Word working effectually upon you, and ſo the Goſpel *will become the Power of God* to your *Salvation*. This is and ſhall be my Prayer for all Religious Aſſemblies, that the Lord will be pleaſed to teach them by his inviſible word,

and beget living desires in them towards himself, and bring them to an esteem of Holiness and Righteousness, that they may adorn the Gospel of Christ, by living Gospel Lives; for want of this what dishonour have Men brought to God, and what reproach upon the Gospel? O that People would come to hear the word Preached with desires to profit by it, and say, Lord do me some good this day, give me a powerful refreshing Visitation at this time; give me some living experience of thy Almighty Power working upon my heart, that I may not be led by this Mans Word, and that Mans Opinion, for if they mistake, I shall be mistaken; but if I build my Faith upon what God in his word reveals to me, I shall infallibly know what I am to Believe and Practice, and I shall receive from God some good thing, and shall *know what is the good and acceptable will of God*; I shall find that there is Power in the Gospel *for building me up in my most Holy Faith*, and that *it is Mighty through God for the pulling down of strong holds of Sin and Satan*, and I shall *see the Salvation of God brought near to me.*

When the Gospel becomes the Power of God, and worketh upon the Hearts of Men by

by the operation of the Divine Power, they may diſtinguiſh between that Faith that is built upon the Declarations of Men, and that which is wrought by the Revelation and diſcovery of the mind of God in their own Souls; this is that which we may bottom upon, and have an Anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt in our own Souls; when we depend upon Chriſt *the Rock of Ages*, both of this Age, and all other Ages; my Faith muſt be placed upon him; and when I hear the word of a Man, I muſt have an eye to God, that will reveal his power in my heart; this will make me believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *to receive that ingrafted word which is able to ſave my Soul.* I ſhall not only hear the word, but live in obedience to it. What ſignifies it to make a Profeſſion that I have the Light within, if I do not give obedience to it? for without that, it is all Hypocriſie, all Pretence to Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, Mortification, is but Hypocriſie any further than we find the power of Truth making an impreſſion upon our Hearts and Minds, bringing us to the obedience of Faith.

Let them therefore that profeſs Righteouſneſs, live Righteouſly, and they that hear the Goſpel, live in obedience to it, and thoſe

that profeſs to be Chriſtians, let them live like Chriſtians indeed: When every one comes to know within himſelf ſo far as the Goſpel has ſhined upon him, that they have received the Truth in the Love of it, and love the Truth as it is in Jeſus, and are obedient to the Goſpel, they ſhall know the Salvation of it. There is a diſcovery of Gods Power in the Goſpel, and there is a believing of it, and a hoping in it; this is that which belongs to a Chriſtian; this is the beginning, and the firſt ſtep to a Chriſtian Life; we muſt believe in Chriſt, *for without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* He that believeth, ſhould be careful to walk in the truth that he hath received, and then he ſhall have a Teſtimony of the Power and Vertue of it in his own Soul. This Vertue and Power, if he joins with it, hath the Government of his Heart and Life, and gives him Victory over the World, and the Temptations of Satan.

You know in the Primitive Times, there were Believers that not only had Faith, but *lived by Faith*, and by that Faith they got Victory over all the allurements, and pleaſure, and vanities of the World. *I have fought a good fight, ſaith the Apoſtle,* 2 Tim 4. 7, 8. *I have finiſhed my Courſe, I have kept the Faith, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that Day, and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing.* I have got the victory, and there remains an Eternal Weight of Glory for me.

My Friends, this is our ambition, and all our Labour among you, that you may be built up in your moſt Holy Faith, that you may be brought home to Chriſt, in all your Meetings, and gatherings together; you ſhould deſire to be enriched with Faith, and to have your own Store-houſe filled

led with all the Fruits of the *Spirit*, and not only ſeek for the knowledge of the truth, but be ſubject and obedient to what you know, otherwiſe by your Religion you will but hurt your ſelves. And the Apoſtle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. *ſpeaks* of knowing the Truth, and of being eſtabliſhed in it, and of ſome that, *after they had eſcaped the Pollutions of the World through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, and the latter end with them is worſe than the beginning; for it had beed better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered to them.* There is a Power goes along with the Preaching of the Goſpel, that will enable you to do what you know; the Goſpel is a powerful Doctrine, whether you know it or not; or whether you ſubmit to it or not, yet pray remember that Gods *People are a willing People in the day of his Power*, they are a certain ſort of People that are devoted to God, and ſubmit all their Worldly Honours, Intereſts, Profits, and Pleaſures to the pleaſure of God, and deſire no other pleaſure or happineſs but to enjoy his preſence and favour; they are ſatisfied with this, and they are a happy People, being made a *willing People in the day of Gods Power*; they are willing to deny themſelves, to take up their daily Croſs, & to follow *Chriſt*, & have *Salvation* upon his terms.

There are a great many Profeſſors that have notions, and out-ſide appearances, but they want that Vertue, and Life, and power that ſhould ſettle them in Religion, and a love of the Truth. The Lord that knows our Hearts, knows that our Labour and Travel among you hath been deſigned for your good, and *that our hearts deſire it, that you may be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus.* We would

have

have People consider, and attend and hear what God speaks, and remember what he hath taught you by the Ministers of the Gospel: We have all ears to hear, let us thank God for that, blessed be God that there is a power and an ability of hearing with an outward ear, but there are many that will not so much as give the hearing to what might from the Lord be spoken to them; *He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches*; and what he saith to his own Soul; hear what the Spirit saith of your own State and Condition; if it be good, bless God for it; are you in so good a Condition that you have no trouble, no distress to lament, no wants to supply, blessed are you that have none; but if you find you have done amiss, and if the Lord should call you this Night to give up your account, the Lord hath a great deal against you I am sure; and I tell you it is your duty to turn to the Lord with unfeigned Repentance, that through Christ Jesus you may receive Pardon and Remission of all your Sins, and so hear what the Spirit saith to your selves, and in your selves.

Pray come and make it your work and business the rest of the time that you have to live, *to work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*, that when Christ comes, you may say, *come Lord Jesus come quickly*, purfie me, and sanctifie me, and prepare me to be presented to the Father *without spot, and blameless*; the day is coming that this will be the desire of every one of you.

And it is the earnest breathing and desire of my Soul, that every one of you may have an eye unto the Lord, and he will look down from Heaven, and have regard to the cry and the sighing of the Needy Soul. God will arise, and find out the People

ple that breath after him, and that desire to be reconciled to him through the Mediatour Christ Jesus; the Lord loveth to find out such a People, and I am glad to Preach to such a People the glad tidings of the Gospel, and to teach them, as God hath taught me, *Good and Upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach and guide you in the way which you should go. Walk humbly with* God, he will *resist the Proud, but he will give Grace unto the humble.* Walk uprightly before the Lord in this Gospel Day that shines upon you; love the appearance of God, and prize it, though it hath not been so Glorious to you, as to some others, yet despise not the Day of small things, live in subjection to that Grace that the Lord hath given you, and the Lord will give you more Grace, and pour out his Spirit, and multiply his Blessings upon you; the Lord hath *begun a good work in* you, and he will *carry it on to the day of Christ*, and will vouchsafe to bring the Glorious Day of his Visitation upon you.

To the Lord I leave you, to his Favour and Protection I commit you, remember that there is no Salvation but by Jesus Christ, and none to be had by Christ, till you come to Believe in him; to him that searcheth the Heart, and tries the Reins, that pardoneth Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin, for the sake of Christ Jesus the Mediatour, to him I do commit you, not doubting but that he that hath begun a good work in you, will at last compleat and finish it to his own Praise and your Salvation.

Sermon

Sermon IX.

The Excellency of *Peace* with God.

Preached at Devonſhire-Houſe, Auguſt 5. 1691.

My Friends,

IT is Mans great happineſs in this World to have Acquaintance with God, with the Lord that made him, from whom he hath Life and Breath here, and his Eternal welfare hereafter; this doubtleſs every one will acknowledge one time or other, that peace with God is a great Jewel, and the beſt Eſtate and Riches. It is the great deſire of every one that they may attain this, one time or other, and there is a great neglect of happineſs among the Sons and Daughters of Men, in not ſeeking of it, and not labouring to attain it while it is to be had, Oh! how many trifle away their time about fading and periſhing Objects, and they know at the ſame inſtant that they are yet deſtitute of the favour of God, and of peace with him. Oh, Friends, the very thoughts and conſideration

consideration of the worth of this Jewel, and of the misery of being without it, and of the uncertainty of our time while it is to be attained, might put every one upon a serious, diligent enquiry after the way and means whereby they might attain it, that so they might have a resting place for their Souls, and satisfaction to their inward Man, that it shall go well with them, when time shall be no more.

And they that come to this Consideration, and are resolved in their hearts and minds that they will labour after this, and set their whole endeavour after it, they will in the first place seek *the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof*: These do need a daily encouragement in their way to Heaven, and there is nothing on the Lords part wanting to such Souls, but that they may attain their desire.

But, alas, this hath been, and is still the misery of thousands, they are seeking after peace with God, but they err in the way to it, they do not seek in that way, nor take hold of those Methods by and through which God hath promised Peace; you shall scarce meet with any body, but they would have Eternal Life and Peace with God; we shall not need to perswade People to wish for, and to desire to have Peace with God when they shall come to die, and lay down their heads in the dust. There is not a *Balaam* but he desires to *die the Death of the Righteous, and that his last end may be like his*. There is not a *Scribe*, or *Pharisee*, or any that profess Religion, but they are seeking after Eternal Life. The Lord Jesus did witness concerning them, that they were an envious, proud, persecuting People, yet that they did seek after Eternal Life, and they pitched upon

upon ſome Methods and Ways whereby they thought to get and enjoy it, but all this was errour ſtill, they were out of the way of attaining it, and ſo are a great many people at this very day; they are in a State and Condition wherein they are never like to enjoy it; the Methods and the ways that they have choſen to themſelves to find Eternal Life by, and to obtain peace with God, will never anſwer the end.

And God hath been pleaſed to diſcover to us the many by-ways that People have choſen and ſeek after peace with God by, therefore we are willing at all times to ſhew People their errour in theſe great matters of higheſt concernment to them. If they did err in their way of ſeeking to obtain ſome earthly good, and miſſed of their end, they know the price of it, it is but a loſs of ſo much, which if they had taken a right courſe they might have attained; but it is an unſpeakable loſs, an ineſtimable loſs, if they loſe peace with God, and all the pains and labour they are at to obtain it.

I beſeech you, Friends, conſider theſe things, they are of great weight, and you will ſay ſo one day or other; for, ſaith our Saviour, *what will it profit a Man to gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul, or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* O how ſad is it to conſider that a Man hath not made proviſion for his Soul, that he hath not a place of reſt for his immortal Soul, and that the arms of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt are not open to receive his Soul, when his Body can retain it no longer. If this be a Mans ſtate when he comes to die, it had been better for him that he had never been born; Men may live, and gather Riches, and enjoy a plentiful Eſtate,

Eſtate, but if they be deſtitute of the favour of God, and peace with him, what will they do with theſe periſhing enjoyments? they cannot poſſibly ſatisfie themſelves with theſe Tranſitory viſible things, but if theſe perſons only mind their Bodies, and neglect their Souls, do they not live *like the Beaſts that periſh*? The Beaſt ſeeks after his Meat, and when he finds it he eats it with delight and pleaſure, and in a little while he lies down and dies, and there is an end; ſo it is with careleſs Souls, that have no regard to their future State; but they ſay, *Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to morrow we ſhall die.*

Oh that every one of us here did apply our hearts ſeriouſly to the conſideration of the weight of theſe things that concern our Eternal State; if perſons did this, then they might come to an enquiry in their own Souls, what method and way is moſt ſafe for the attaining of ſo bleſſed an end. For you know there are abundance of People if you look up and down in the World, you will ſee every body almoſt hunting up and down in ſome way of Religion or other, and are engaged in Religious Performances, what is the matter? what would you have? We would have peace with God here, and everlaſting Reſt hereafter in the Kingdom of Heaven, that we would have. Thus have the Nations been ſcattered and driven up and down in the purſuit of Happineſs and Satisfaction.

There is a general Belief amongſt people, that there is a Heaven and a Hell, and that they muſt have their part in one of them; there are none that deſire a Portion in the *Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone.* Thoſe Prophane Wretches that cry to God to damn them, they do not mean

mean what they ſpeak, they would be ſaved for all that; every one will cry at laſt, Lord have mercy upon me, if he hath but time to ſay ſo: Let us cry Lord have mercy upon me now, Lord beſtow thy Favour upon me *Lord lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me*, Lord touch my hard heart, and ſoften it, and break it by the power of thy Spirit; *open mine eyes that I may ſee the wonderful things of thy Law*; open mine ears that I may hear thy voice. It is good for People to make uſe of time while they have it, for whoſoever calls upon the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved, and God will *pour out his wrath upon thoſe that call not upon his Name*. He that calls upon the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved, and God gives great encouragement to People to ſeek after him.

What mean you by ſeeking after God? I have gone to Church, and ſaid my Prayers, I have gone in that way which my Fathers have lead me, and directed me, *I* hope I ſhall find mercy at laſt; I am a Believer. I believe in Jeſus Chriſt that died for my Sins, and roſe again for my Juſtification; I hope through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt I ſhall be ſaved. What mean you by ſeeking after the Lord? Do not we all hear of him, and pray to him every day?

Is there any thing more common than this that People ſpeak to one another generally about? as for the general knowledge of God, you and I may ſee to our ſorrow, that a great many cry Lord, Lord, that are never like to enter into the Kingdom of God. If all that take the name of God in their mouths ſhould enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, it would be a very foul Kingdom: If all the Drunkards and Whoremongers of

of *England*, and all prophane ungodly Persons that will take the name of God in their mouths should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, it would be a very unclean and impure Kingdom; there is *nothing enters* there *that is unclean, that is abominable, that loveth and maketh a lye.* So that there must be some more peculiar People that shall have an abundant enterance into the Kingdom of God, and there must be something that will intitle them to it. For you may remember our Saviour saith, *No Man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.* So much as may be known of God by works you and I may know without the Revelation of Christ, we need not wait for this knowledge, we can have it by Books, we can have it without Christs Revelation. Nothing would serve some in our Saviours time but Eternal Life, and our Lord Jesus bids them *search the Scriptures, for in them* (saith he) *you think to have Eternal Life, and they are they which testifie of me.* Yet for all the profession they made, he tells them, *No Man hath seen God at any time, neither seen his shape, nor heard his voice*; they were strangers to God, though they had a general knowledge of God.

So it is at this day, there is a general knowledge of God, and people hope to attain peace with God, and Eternal Life. Their Parents and their Tutors have instructed them in the Principles of Christianity, and about the Attributes of God, but all this will not bring a Man to a saving knowledge of God, and reconciliation with him. For a Man that is as wicked as the Devil can make him knows these things, and yet may be a Servant of the Devil, and do his work; he is not born again and become a Child by all his External knowledge,

knowledge. Now he that desires to come to the true saving knowledge of God, our Saviour hath told us, *That none know the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him*, that is a sure way to come to the true knowledge of God by Jesus Christ, he hath the Key that openeth the Heart, and he will bring us to the true knowledge of God the Father. *Christ hath the Key of David which openeth and no Man shutteth, and shutteth, and no Man openeth.* He can bring us to behold the glory of God in his own Face; without him we are never like to come to the saving knowledge of God.

Poor Man is in a lapsed fallen state, he is fallen into Sin, and is in a state of alienation from God, and therefore he cannot come to him but by a Mediatour; *There is one Mediatour between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, and he must make peace for him, else he will never have it; how then shall we come to Christ if he is the only means, and there is no other by which we may come to the knowledge of God, as the Scripture speaks? hearken to it, how may we come to Christ? I answer, you will never come to him, if he first come not to you, you will never be able to do it. It is not coming to Christ when you say you do believe that Christ died and rose again, and ascended up into Heaven, and sits at the Right hand of God, and lives for ever to make intercession for his People, and to read those words and Doctrines which he preached up and down at Meetings, and solemn Assemblies; but if you believe that he is *the Eternal Son of God, and the Author of Eternal Salvation to all that obey him*, you must come to him, and entirely give up your selves to his Glory and Service; without this you cannot

cannot come to him, nor will he bring you to the Father; Christ is come near to us, he ſtands at the door of our hearts, and he ſtands and knocks; behold, that is a word that calls for attention, for People to take notice of. *Behold I ſtand at the Door and knock*; what doſt thou knock for? ſaith Chriſt, that thou mayſt open the door of thy heart; *for if any Man open I will come in and Sup with him, and be with me, and my Father will come to him, and we will make our Abode with him.*

Now People are loth to be at this pains and trouble to open the door of their Hearts to Chriſt, or they will not believe it is Chriſt that knocks, and that rebukes and checks them when they refuſed to open to him; when they find ſomething within that reproves them for their Sin, and doth condemn them that they cannot be quiet: They will never believe that this is Chriſt; How can this be Chriſt ſay they? He is Aſcended up to Heaven, and he is at the Right Hand of God the Father: Will you make me believe that this is Chriſt knocking at the door of my Heart, I cannot believe it; but what ſaith our Saviour, *Unleſs you believe that I am he, you ſhall Die in your Sins.* For there is no body elſe can help you out of them.

There is a twofold conſideration that we are to have of Chriſt; one is as he is *Made of a Woman, made under the Law*; and another conſideration of Chriſt is, as he is the Eternal Son of God. Men have very groſs thoughts of Chriſt to think that becauſe he is in Heaven, therefore he cannot be here too: They meaſure him by themſelves; they know becauſe a man is at *London*, therefore he cannot be at *York* at the ſame time. Thus theſe men

men object, Christ is in Heaven, How can he be here? His Doctrine and Precepts are here, let us make use of them all; he will come again at the Day of Judgment; but there is a Day of Judgment; Doth not he Judge you now? *He is the Judge both of Quick and Dead, and he is the searcher of Hearts, and the tryer of the Reines*; so that thou canst not think an ill thought but he will tell thee of it; he is nearer to thee than the Wife of thy bosome, or thy Husband that is near to thee: Husband and Wife may think an ill thought, but they cannot tell one another of it; but Christ is one that comes so near thee, that thou canst not conceive an ill thought against thy Neighbour but he will tell thee of it.

This is the Lord Christ, as a Spirit, a quickning Spirit who is made manifest in the Flesh; *He hath given to every man a measure of the Spirit to profit withal: The Grace of God which bringeth Salvation hath appeared unto all men.* Notwithstanding the distinction by Learned Men between Common Grace and Spiritual Grace; this Grace *That brings Salvation hath appeared to all men*: This manifestation of the Spirit and Light within we have from Christ. These are the Ways and Methods that the Lord Christ hath taken to approach near to us. Now your own reason will tell you, if this be the way and means that Christ takes to approach near to us, we cannot take another way to approach to him; if Christ hath taken (I say) this way to approach to us, by the Light and Manifestation of his own Spirit which convinceth us of Sin: If this be Christs way of coming to us, there can be no other way of our coming to him, but by the same method of his Grace. He saith, *If you have the Light, Believe in the Light.* I have

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the Light, I am Enlightned, there is ſomething that Diſcovereth my evil Thoughts; Why muſt I believe in the Light? That you may be the Children of Light, as our Saviour ſpeaks, They that are the Children of Light ſhall have it for their Inheritance; and they that are Children of Darkneſs, muſt have Darkneſs for their Inheritance: While we have the Light, we muſt believe in it; and we ſhall be made Children of Light: God hath ſent his Son, and the Son hath ſent his Spirit and his Heavenly Grace into our Hearts, that we may draw near to him, and be directed how to attain acquaintance with him; and to do that which pleaſeth God, and come to be in union with him, and do the works of God. This is that which God requires of us, *That we will believe on him whom he hath ſent:* That we may embrace the Light, and believe in the Light, in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Pray what do you mean by believing? there is ſomething within me Checks and Reproves me for Sin, and calls me off from it, and bids me turn over a new Leaf: Muſt I hearken to this? Is this that which you mean by believing? As to this degree of believing, they that reject it now, ſhall believe hereafter; for all the World at laſt, and the Damned in Hell ſhall certainly confeſs, that there was Grace, and Light, and Means afforded to them, and they might have gone farther and have eſcaped that miſery that they are fallen into.

But there is a more precious Faith that I would have you partake of, a *Faith that worketh by Love.* Since the Lord hath been ſo gracious as to extend his mercy and Love to me, I am ſo taken with the Love of God that I will be obedient to him; this

this *Faith that worketh by Love, is the Faith of Gods Elect*; that by which we may obtain Victory over our Paſſions and Lufts, and over Satan and the Snares of the World; when we are come to cloſe with the Grace of God, and to believe in Chriſt; this is well: But we muſt alſo yield obedience and ſubjection. Yet when Faith hath brought forth obedience, you cannot be juſtified by it, you cannot be ſaved by your obedience, but by Chriſt alone: *He is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, and a Mediatour from firſt to laſt.

Now all that come to cloſe with the appearance of Chriſt in their own hearts, they have laid hold on the method appointed for their coming to him. It is Chriſt they muſt hear, he is come ſo near to Men that they may hear his voice, and hear him tell us our very thoughts. Why ſhould not I hear him when he checks me and reproves me for Sin? he comes near and tells me I have done amiſs; Lord, I have done iniquity, I will do ſo no more. Thus Chriſt Converſeth with his People, and doth not only check and reprove them when they do that which is evil, but perſwades them and enables them to do good. He is a Mediatour, he is a middle Perſon, and hath taken Fleſh upon him, that he might reconcile them to God, that do believe in him.

Now, when we come to have acquaintance with God, and have choſen him to be our God, he teaches us to do what is good, and reproves us for what evil we have done. Who can chuſe a better guide to lead him into acquaintance with God, than Chriſt that is converſant with us, piereing into our thoughts, and ſpeaking to us? I may hear him with the inward ear of my heart, when I do evil he checks me for it, and tells me

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the thing I ſhould ſeek is of ineſtimable value, and if through my unbelief and careleſneſs I miſs of it, it had been better for me that I had never been born; now we are in the way of coming to receive the end of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls, *let us not neglect ſo great Salvation.* No Man can ſave himſelf, nor ſave the Soul of his Brother, nor find a Ranſom, nor procure an Offering for the expiating of his Sin, therefore let every one that would have his Sin expiated and pardoned, and cannot be ſatisfied and quieted till he hath peace with God; let him come to Chriſt the Mediatour, and come with Faith and Truth in the inward parts, and ſubmit to him, and be willing to be ruled by him, then Chriſt will ſave him, *and preſent him without ſpot and blemiſh to* his Father.

Conſider that thoſe that are the People of God are led by the Spirit of God, and they have miſſed their way to reconciliation with God, that love any other way, or think to come to God any other way than by Jeſus the Mediatour, their labour will be loſt, therefore I muſt exhort and perſwade you that are out of the way, that you would take Gods method, and come into Gods way. The torments I have told you are made already; the bargain is not to make now, I will give you ſo much to be at peace with God, or I will part with this and the other thing that is dear to me. No, the Agreement is made between God and Chriſt, and his *Covenant is ordered in all things, and ſure*, and his Covenant ſtands ſure with none but thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus. There was a Covenant made with *Abraham. In thy ſeed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed.* The promiſes made to the Seed, that is to thoſe that are in

Christ, the Faithful are counted the Seed, now the Faithful art those that are obedient to Christ, who is the seed of the promise, *in whom all the Families of the Earth are blessed.* They must come to Christ the seed, they must not rebel against him, they must come to him and believe in him, be there never so many Nations and Families in the World, the Promise is not to them, *but to as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

Here is the way for People to lay hold of, for coming into acquaintance with God, which is of so great necessity before they die, they must come to Christ himself by his Spirit in their own hearts. We need not go to this and the other Learned Man, and inquire of this and the other sort of People, but we must cry to God for help and direction, and come unto him, and give up all the powers and faculties of our Souls to him to be governed by him: God will have Servants that will be obedient to him; if ever we come to obtain Salvation we must have another Master, *one is your Master even Christ,* I must come under the government of Christ, and he must lead me and rule me if I will be a Child of God.

When People come to see there is no effectual way but submitting to the grace of God in their own hearts, and yielding themselves up to the dictates of the Spirit of Christ in their Souls; when they come to this, there are many hazards and difficulties to be encounter'd with; there is the appearance of the Cross of Christ, and we must take up this Cross if we will follow Christ, and be obedient in all things unto him. This is that which will kill all my pleasures, lay waste all my Religion, and destroy all my hopes; I must be like a Man that hath built a house without a good foundation; I must pull it all down again, and I must come to build again upon a new foundation. He

Here many have turned aside, the Cross of Christ hath seemed to them so sharp, and hard and intollerable, that they could not bear it; they would not be at the charge of such a Religion, what must I part with all my delights, and my beloved lusts and pleasures, and all my interests in the world for Christ? I cannot part with these, these things lie in my way, I must rather lose my Soul than part with what is so grateful to me, and joyn with the light of mine own Conscience, and the truth in my inward parts? What must not I have so much as liberty of thought? What must my thoughts be regulated by that which is so cross and repugnant to my mind? Must I throw out all evil thoughts out of my heart, and suffer none but good thoughts to remain there? Who can stand here? Who can bear such strictness as this? Rather than endure this, I will chuse to lose my Soul; many have lost the Truth on this account, and many are in danger to lose their Souls.

If there be in you, Sirs, any desire of peace with God, that you may not go hence before you have attained it, take hold of the present opportunity; hardness of heart is a desperate plague, it comes from a long obstinate continuance in sin, when we have *withstood the day of Gods Patience and Long-Suffering, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God*, then God *giveth us up to our own Hearts Lusts*; because *we will not hearken to the voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely*; *when we stop our ears and will not* attend to the Calls of God; when Men will go on and nothing can stop them in the career of their Lusts and Pleasures, but they will retain their Carnal Delights and Friendship with the World; this hardness of heart is a desperate plague; take heed of it, that it doth not overtake you, and bring ruine and destruction upon you: *Consider the Patience and Long-*

ſuffering of God, and let his goodneſs lead you to Repentance; Conſider *God hath waited to be gracious to you, he hath exerciſed much long-ſuffering and patience towards you*; whereas he might have cut you off long ago, & given you your Portion with the damned in Hell, but he hath hearkned to the Mediatour that hath pleaded for you; he hath extended his patience and Long-ſuffering to *the Wicked and Rebellious alſo*; *and for* this reaſon the Apoſtle tells us that Chriſt is *the Saviour of all Men, eſpecially of them that believe.*

Now the Patience and Long-ſuffering of God hath been lengthned out to us all, and we have not improved it. Conſcience hath been ſenſible of the inward ſtroaks and rebukes of God for ſin, and of the inward calls of his Grace to bring us to Repentance; but we have not regarded thoſe Calls, nor hearkned to the voice of God ſo as to hear that our Souls might live. O let us not put off our Repentance any longer; but *to day while it is called to day let us hear his voice and not harden our hearts*, but be of a tender heart, let our hearts be ſoftned, and entendered under the word of God, and under the ſtroaks of his Judgments. If ever the Lord bring you unto a tender frame, you will receive the word of God with meekneſs, and mix it with Faith, then it will work effectually to the amendment of your Lives, it will work Faith in thoſe that are Unbelievers, and ſtrengthen the Faith of thoſe that Believe. Then we ſhall have cauſe to bleſs the Lord and Praiſe and Magnifie his Great Name for his Patience, Long-ſuffering, and Mercy, which at this Day he hath lengthned out, and graciouſly extended to us.

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Sermon X.

True Christianity.

Preached at Grace-Church *street* April 10. 1692.

THE Institution of the Christian Religion was for this purpose, that Holiness and Righteousness might be brought forth in the Earth; that God through his Son Jesus Christ might take delight in the Sons and Daughters of Men; that they be reconciled to him; *For that which the Law could not do by reason of its weakness, God hath had a purpose to do by his Son, and to him he gave all Power in Heaven and Earth:* that thereby he might be enabled to perform the great work of God, in establishing Righteousness, and in bringing forth a Holy People, to serve a Holy God. This is the great blessing that is come to us, and to all Mankind, through our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that came *to turn every one from the evil of their ways.* That is the way and method by which our Lord Jesus accomplished the end of his coming, and the Will of his Heavenly Father; *Moses* and all his Washings, and Offerings, and Sacrifices, could not make clean and purge the Conscience, and by all his Offerings and Sacrifices, he could not reconcile us to God: *But Jesus by his once Offering himself did forever perfect them that are sanctified: and by one Offering reconciled us to the Father,* and so brings

forth a Holy Generation unto God, through Regeneration and the Sanctification of the Spirit.

And seeing the Lord hath been pleased in the Riches of his Grace, to open this new and living way, for man's returning again into unity, and fellowship with his Maker. The Question my Friends that I would put to you on the behalf of God, is for all of you to consider, whether it is not best for every one of us to lay hold of Salvation, to lay hold of that blessing wherewith the Lord hath blessed us, that so the principal institution of Christianity, might not only be named and noised, but might come to be enjoyed and witnessed in every one of our own Souls; And that all might wait with expectation on the Lord Jesus Christ, for fulfilling of this great Work in themselves.

There is a general Notion among People, that Heaven is a Holy Place, and that nothing that is unclean can enter into it to have a habitation there, when time in this World shall be no more with us, and that time which we have given us, I am sure is given us of God, as an opportunity of fitting and preparing us for his dwelling place, and every day and hour of it ought to be imployed in that great Work, that so we might draw nearer and nearer to that state and condition that suits and befits that holy dwelling where Saints and Angels, for evermore praise the Great and Glorious God; So that I am perswaded you believe, that you and all of us, are to be accountable to God for all the time which he hath bestowed upon us, whether we use it to the purposes for which he hath given it, or whether we mispend our time upon those things that are not profitable to us, and upon these considerations we had need all of us to take heed to our present state

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that we are come to, and are arrived at in the present time. As for the future time, that we all know we are not sure of, and the future state that we may hope to come to: There is no certainty of it, unless there be an Improvement of the present time, and the opportunities of our present state, therefore every one should apply their Hearts unto the seeking of Wisdom and Understanding, and unto God that he may give us to understand our present state, and our present fitness or unfitness for the Kingdom of Glory and Happiness, and of that Holy dwelling we hope to enjoy for ever.

If I will but turn my mind inward, to the serious consideration of my present state and condition, I can tell whether I am fit or unfit, to approach Gods presence; And if I find I am unfit, I must have recourse to the Divine Working of that great Power, which God hath ordained and appointed for this purpose, I must come to him to work all my works in me, and for me according to his good pleasure; And that he never will do, unless it be by crossing me in my Carnal Pleasure and Corrupt Inclinations, for that which pleaseth man, doth not please God: And God will not revoke the Holy Scripture that tells us, *That they which live in pleasure are dead while they live*, they that are indulgent to their own Affections and their own Delights, and their own humours, they are not at all ready to please and glorifie God, they are not fitted for it, therefore he never sanctifies, nor brings any into a true Christian state, but through a daily Cross, so that if I am not fitted and prepared to do that which is pleasing to God I may be fitted by taking up a daily Cross to Glorifie God here, and enjoy him for ever.

What those things are that you are to do, I need not tell you, nor what you have done, I judge no

man: There is one that judgeth, he will tell you if you ask him, what your state and condition is: He will tell the Drunkard if he ask him, whether he is fit for Heaven, and also the Proud and Haughty person, whether they are fit for Heaven; Let such as are guilty of these or any other Sins, enquire of the Oracle in their own bosoms, am not I fit for Heaven, notwithstanding all this? He will tell thee no, there is *no unclean thing shall enter there, nothing that defiles*, nothing that hurts or oppresseth; The Proud, Peevish, Malicious person that is hurtful to others, that hurts his Neighbour, he is shut out, Rev. 21. 27. *There shall in no wise enter into Heaven any thing that defileth*, and Rev. 22. 15. *For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whore-mongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lie.* None shall enter into the Holy City of God, but those that are purified and purged from all Iniquity: Therefore God hath sent his Son Jesus, seeing none else could do it: *Moses* and the Prophets could not do it, therefore he sent Jesus to *bless us in turning every one of us from our Iniquites*, and from our evil ways; one man hath this evil way, another that evil way: It is all one to him, his Work is to turn every one of us from our evil ways.

But why then (you may say) are so few turned from their evil ways throughout Christendom? Where Christ is Believed in, Professed, Read, and Heard, that yet so few are converted and turned, for we see great numbers of Lyars, Swearers, Drunkards, Unclean Persons among us, where Christ is cried up at a mighty rate, and yet people are not turned from the evil of their ways, there is something sure that is the reason of it.

I would have all of you consider what the reason of it is, that those that profess to be Christians are not

not turned from the evil of their ways, for Christ *hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him*, and he is able to do it, and he was sent from God on purpose to do it, but this is a certain truth, it is not done, and what is the reason of it? *He came to his own, and his own received him not*, what is the reason? He hath caused his Grace to appear to every man in the World, and yet they are not taught by it. Here is an object of Faith for all, and God hath offered Faith to all men, *since he hath raised up Jesus from the Dead*, yet men have it not; what is the reason that this Nation as well as other Nations, have been puzzled about it, to find out things that are so plain in Scripture, in relation to the Love of God to Mankind, and in relation to Christ Jesus the Saviour and yet so little of this work is wrought among us?

Some say there is never a man in the World turned from the evil of their ways, they live in Sin, and they are under a fixed necessity of continuing in it, and lying under it all the days of their Life, for all this belief of the Love of God, and the Power of Christ, and the Profession of it, some say there is never a Christian in the World, can live one day without Sin, but will defile himself with one thing or other, that the Devil will prevail over men, and Sin will mixt it self with our Prayers, and Alms, and all our Holy Duties, so that there is nothing clean, nothing pure that we can perform to God. There are others that are not so rash in their Judgment, and not so inconsiderate but they will believe some Men and Women may come to a Power and Ability to withstand Satan, and resist him in his Temptations, and that there are those that have been turned from the evil of their ways, but they are not. What is the matter? You have spent time about this, what is the Reason you are

not turned from the evil of your ways? The Devil hath told the *People* in former Days, that the reason why men live in sin, is because God hath appointed it so to be: and that hath stopt the mouths of many a plain-hearted, tender Christian: They have cried unto God under the weight of their Sin, and they see no deliverance after all their *Prayers* and Tears, because they have been told they cannot do it, and that God hath appointed it should be so, and required them to do that they cannot do, and with some the Custom of Sin hath taken away the Sense of Sin, and they go on to *Perdition* in their security.

I hope my friends that God hath opened your Eyes, and that you have better thoughts of God, than that he hath set you a Work and a Labour to do, and by his Eternal *Power* and Decree, hath Ordained that you should never do it, but Damn you after all. Consider there are Men and Women in Bondage and Captivity, and God hath sent his Son into the World, to redeem them from all Iniquity, and turn them from their evil ways; we are not turned, what is the reason of it? I beseech you in the Love of God, be serious in this matter, serious you must be one time or other, when you come to the Tribunal of God, there must be reason given, or if not you must be speechless, therefore find it out here. What is the reason that I am not turned from my evil ways, since God hath sent his Son Jesus to do it, and given him power to do it: why then is it not done?

Some persons upon enquiry, and after their search have brought forth this reason: They have alledged the great power the Devil hath; The Devil is so strange and hath such a Power to darken their minds, and inchant their affections; He injects and brings

brings things into their minds before they are aware of it: I confeſs this, and I would ſay a little to it, I will confeſs as much as the argument will bear, that the Devil hath great power, and a way of injection of things into the Spirits and Affections of People: He is Gods Enemy and ours too, and he lies in wait and will do as much as he can againſt us, that never a one ſhall get to Heaven, if we come thither it ſhall be againſt his Will; I have heard ſome magnifie the Devils Power to ſuch a degree, that he hath ſuch power over a man or woman, that he is able to keep them in ſin all their Life, though God hath put forth the exceeding greatneſs of his power for their Redemption: This is hard to believe, that the Devil is ſtronger than Chriſt Jeſus; Well, as great as his power is, we are in a capacity of knowing a greater power, the Apoſtle did comfort Chriſtians, notwithſtanding all the power the Devil uſed with them to defile them, and keep them from inheriting the Kingdom of God, 1 Joh. 1. 4 *You are of God, little children, and have overcome, becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.* I would have you believe this, I do believe it heartily, the Devil only *rules in the Hearts of the Children of Diſobedience*, and he that hath the Holy Ghoſt in him, hath one greater than he that is in the World: If you believe this, then the queſtion is thus far anſwered, that we have a Saviour, a Deliverer, that is more able to Redeem us, than the Devil is to keep us in Bondage; I hope we are pretty well, now we know we have a keeper; We are aſſaulted with the Devils temptations, and they are powerful, How powerful? He hath ſo much power, as he finds in us an inclination to yield and joyn with his temptations: If he comes with a temptation to a man or woman that hath no inclination to that thing he tempts them to, if they hate that thing

thing, then there is an end of it; The Devils power lyes in this, when he brings a temptation that I have an inclination to, then he hath a party within me, if that be rooted out what signifies his power, let him bring never so many temptations?

There are many of you that understand what I say, if a temptation comes to a man to commit an act of uncleanness, if he be a chast man, there is no inclination in him to yield to it, or joyn with it, he hates it, it is an abomination it self, and grievous and provoking to God, if he doth it, a man abhors it, then what powerful temptation is it? If it light upon a man of an unclean mind, that is defiled in his Heart, he hath not only the Devil but his own Lust and corrupt inclination to contend with, but if a man believeth in Christ, he relies upon him, and he will say, Lord thou seest I am under a temptation, here is a great and a powerful temptation, I can never withstand it, but I trust in thy name and power, do thou arise and deliver me from it: Thus when God doth arise his Enemies will be scattered; Tho the Devils power be great, yet there is a Deliverer that is stronger than he; The reason of mens being overcome doth not lie in the greatness of the Devils power, but in the frailty of our nature.

Some will say that our natures are so frail and weak, and depraved, that we can do nothing as we ought to do, this is given for another reason, and there is truth in it, but that truth is but a delusion, they would excuse themselves when they have yielded to a Temptation, I am weak and frail, I cannot resist the Devil, tho the Devil is not stronger than Christ, yet he is stronger than I, he worketh with all his might, power and subtilty to deceive me, and ensnare me, and overcome me, I am a poor frail Creature, therefore I must yield to him; This

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is a carnal reason, if I were to grapple with the Devil in mine own strength, and to deliver my Soul, as if God had left me to my self; If thou say Lord thou hast set me to grapple with the Devil, and to withstand his temptations, Lord I am not able to do it my self; God will answer thee, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty, that is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to me by him*; So that thou are not to overcome the Devil by thine own power and ability; If any man reason thus, the reason is out of Doors, for we are saved by Christ, therefore I cannot plead mine own frailty, seeing God hath provided a *Rock* for my defence *that is stronger and higher than I*, that I may trust and relye upon.

So that you see the frailties of our nature is not a sufficient reason, we must seek further for it yet, and when we come to search narrowly, and to the bottom of our Hearts, I will tell you here it rests it hath its center in the perverseness of the Will that is in man, that is contrary to the Will of God; It is the opposition of our Will to the Will of God, we may talk what we will of Salvation and Christianity, that we have a mind to be saved, and go unto God when we die, and to enjoy the happiness of Heaven to Eternity: We may talk thus, but as long as the perverseness of the Will continues, I am the cause of mine own ruine, if I grow in a profession, this perverse Will will grow up with me under that profession, and under any profession; change your judgment and opinion as often as you List, this will go along with you, the reason and the bottom of things will come to this, none can overcome the Devil, nor be a Disciple of Christ without a daily cross. When people come to this to see a necessity of taking up the cross of Christ, and denying themselves: When it comes to this there are such shifts and evasions

evasions and arts that men have to cover themselves, to make themselves and others believe, that such and such a thing is consistent with the Will of God, and that they may do it, and save their own Souls, but they boast of their own deceit, and are glad that they can make a shift to save their own Souls, so that there is no hopes of their ever being purged and cleansed, and of having any holy work brought forth by them; but when a man comes to be sensible of his spiritual condition, and is sincere and honest, he will be ready to say unto God, if I be deceived in any thing, open mine Eyes; Lord if I indulge my self in any thing that hath a contrariety to thy holy Will: Lord I beseech thee discover it to me; such a man will lay aside his own Will, if it be contrary to Gods Will: Now here is one that is a very fit Object for Christ to work upon, he will not be long before he be savingly convinced; When a man comes to the Word, he is convinced of such an evil in his Conscience, where no body but God and himself were privy to it, or had any knowledge of it: It is discovered that he liveth in such a practice as is contrary to the mind of God: God hath convinced thee, that thou lovest it, and livest in it: And if thou wilt but break off that evil practice that hath sent his Son Jesus Christ to turn thee from every evil way, and to *Redeem thee from all Iniquity.*

This truth hath a savour in it, and if thou art sincere and upright, there is nothing for thee to say or do, but to set thy self against every thing that is contrary to the mind of God, and thou wilt have light from Heaven sent to guide thee and direct thee in thy way thither, if thou wilt but receive that Grace that is freely given of God unto thee through Jesus Christ, he will certainly purge thee and cleanse thee from thy Sin, and turn thee from every evil way, notwithstanding the perverseness of thine own Will and Power of Satan;

tan; And he will work in thy Heart by his Grace, till it hath wrought thee off from thine iniquity, and wrought iniquity out of thee, and so bring forth a holy work to God.

Without Faith it is impossible to please God; We cannot please God without Faith, nor with it neither, unless it be the gift of God; There is a great deal of Faith in this Nation, and in this City: But do you believe all their ways are pleasing to God? We must distinguish of Faith here; When the Apostle would give a description of saving Faith, he tells you that *it is the Operation of God*, if I have not that Operation, and a regard to it, how can I have that working? But since it is the dispensation of the Gospel of Christ, and design of Christ to turn people to the operation of God in their own hearts, we would have them believe it.

If there be a drunkard or a prophane person, if God work faith in his Heart, he will be convinced and say, what a stroak hath the Lord given upon my Conscience, and he will see it is the Lords work; Then believe whoever thou art, and lay hold of this, for this is *the Operation of God* for thy Salvation, this is the Operation of God upon a believing Soul, the stroak of Gods hand and the Power of God, and then thou hast the work of Faith, by which Faith thou art enabled to keep thy self from that thing, that God smote thee for, and before he give thee over, the same hour thou wilt find the same hand, smiting thee for another sin, this will be like fire in thy bones kindling up thy zeal and hatred against thy sin, and will kindle in thee a holy fire of Love to God, that hath not let thee lie in thy misery, but minded thy condition and had compassion on thee; This love God will shed abroad, which will run over thy Heart, *He hath shed abroad his Love*, (saith the Apostle) Rom. 5. *upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, to constrain us to yield obedience when thou falleſt into the way

way of Faith, which is the Operation of God, the Devil comes and knocks and bounceth on this side and that, and will tempt thee to walk in thy old course, but God will not fail to give thee the power to withstand temptation.

The Lord Jesus Christ he worketh in peoples Hearts to turn them from the evil of their ways that so he may bring forth holiness and righteousness, and redeem a people from under the Bondage of Sin, and fit them for the Kingdom of his Father, (and to use the Apostles words) *present them before the Throne of God, without spot and blameless, he will purifie them, and sprinkle them from an evil Conscience*, their bodies being washed with pure Water, he will sanctifie the Creature, his Word is nigh them and in their Hearts, he begins a good Work in many and will carry it on in one and in another.

Here lies the chief Work, it is the good hand of God must *work all our works in us and for us, according to the good pleasure of his will.* work in you a willingness to bear the Cross of Christ, and to deny your selves; he will operate for you for this purpose, therefore you must commit your selves to him.

It is not our Preaching which will Convert Men to God, but it is the word of God that is pure, which Converts the Soul to God, and that cleanseth and fits and prepares it for the Kingdom of Heaven, *Psalm* 19. 7. We must come to the word of God, that will convince us, reprove us, strengthen, encourage, illuminate us, and do in us and for us all that we staud in need of; to him be all the praise that worketh all in you, and prepares you *to be a Peculiar People to himself.* To the word of his Grace I commit you all, take heed of doing any thing contrary to it; if you do, that which would be your Comfort, will be your Condemnation.

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His Prayer after Sermon.

Blessed God, and Father of Life, thou art Glorious in Holiness, Infinite in Power, the Eternal God, thy Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, thy Kingdom is without end; O Lord, we bless and praise thy Glorious Name, that thou hast made known thy self among the Sons and Daughters of Men; thou hast revealed to us in thy word the manner of the coming of thy Kingdom among us, in setting up Righteousness and Truth, and throwing down iniquity. Powerful God of Life, subject the Minds and Hearts of all thy People to thy Divine power and pleasure, and let the dread of thy self rest upon our Spirits, that every one of us may fear to Sin against thee, and to do despite to thy Spirit, the Spirit of thy Grace, that we may every one of us turn from our iniquities, the evil of our hearts and ways that we may praise thee in the Land of of the Living, and may become faithful witnesses of that Salvation which thou hast wrought for us, and for all them that believe. Powerful God of Life, the Souls of thy People which thou hast gathered out of the World do praise and magnifie thy Name for what they have seen, and for what thou hast wrought; thou hast wonderfully appeared in thy love, and brought Salvation near, and gathered many into it, it is become a Wall, and a Bulwark to them that they are defended from the Evil One, and from the evils of the world; O dearest God of Life raise up poor and needy Souls out of the dust, that they may serve thee, and obey thee, and do thy will, and shew forth thy power and strength in their weakness and infirmity, that they may trust in thee, and rely upon thee in the time of their distress. Blessed Father of life and power, give grace to the humble and meek, and teach them in thy way. We have had experience O Lord, of thy fulfilling thy promists, thou art still fulfilling of them to all that truly wait upon thee; thou hast begun a good work, wilt thou carry it on to the praise and exaltation of thy great name. Blessed Father reveal thy Power

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more and more in the Nations round about, that they that long after the life of the living God may come and find thee, and behold thy Divine appearance through the Son of thy Love in their own Spirits, that so they may receive thy word, and thy word may quicken them, to stand up from the dead, and live; for it is the living, the living, O Lord, that praise thee, that honour thy Name, that offer praise and glorifie thee. O Blessed Father of Life carry on thy great work with power throughout all the Earth, gather a remnant of thy seed that are scattered, and bring them home into the Kingdom of thy dear Son, that we may praise thee together, and rejoyce in thy Name. Dear Father, thou hast saved this Nation, the Land of our Nativity to this day, by a wonderful power, by thy powerful arm; our Souls are deeply sensible of the stretching forth of thy Almighty hand in our preservation at this day; so living Father, if it be thy heavenly pleasure, lengthen forth our Tranquility, and the enjoyment of thy mercy and goodness to the Inhabitants thereof, that they may learn to fear thee, and turn to thee with their whole hearts, and break off by true Repentance from all those sins that grieve thy Holy Spirit; that so living Father of life, they may come to walk in Love and in Union with the heavenly Power, and have Concord one with another; and shew forth the Power of thy Grace manifested to them, and magnifie thy love and power, and give thee honour and renown for that great salvation, that thou hast wrought for them, that so thy great name may be exalted, and thy will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven; that the Souls of thy People may be refreshed with thy love, and the joys of thy presence, and the revelation of thy Heavenly power, for this, Living Praises, and Christian Thanksgivings, we offer up to thee, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, for thou art worthy of all Praise, and Glory, and Dominion, for ever, and ever, Amen.

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